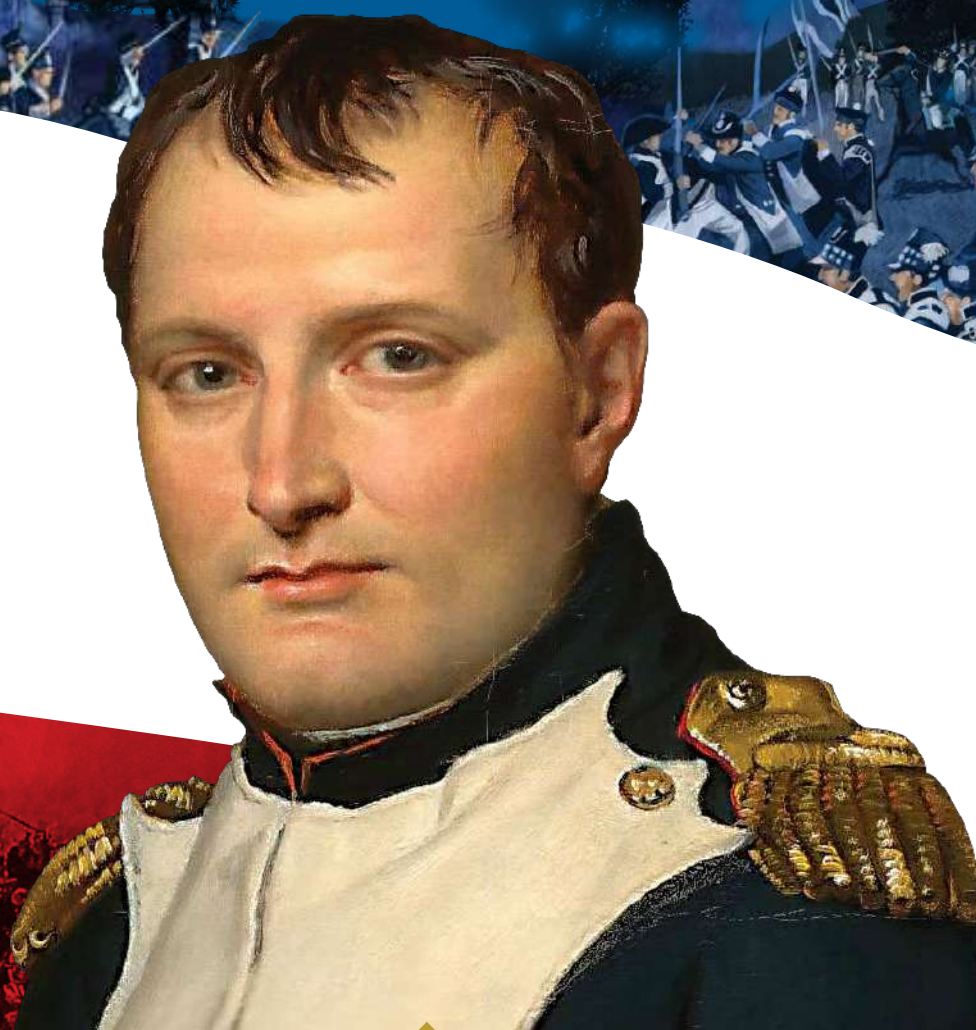


NEW NAPOLEONIC WARS

Explore the fight that brought Europe to its knees

From the
makers of
**HISTORY
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NAPOLEONIC WARS

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Europe descended into a tumultuous series of wars of unprecedented scale and brutality. For more than a decade, an entire continent fought across land and sea, and at the centre of it all was one of history's greatest and most controversial leaders: Napoleon Bonaparte. In this bookazine we chart the seismic events that made up what we now call the Napoleonic Wars, from the rise of the French Empire to Bonaparte's final defeat and exile. You'll find profiles of Europe's most influential leaders and generals, and blow-by-blow accounts of some of the period's defining battles, from Austerlitz and Trafalgar to Borodino and Waterloo. Read on, and immerse yourself in the fascinating stories of one of history's most important conflicts.

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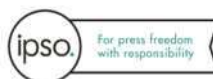


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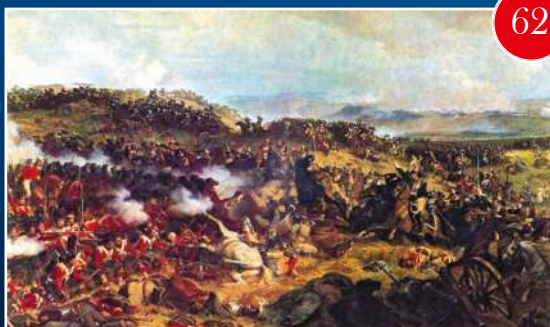
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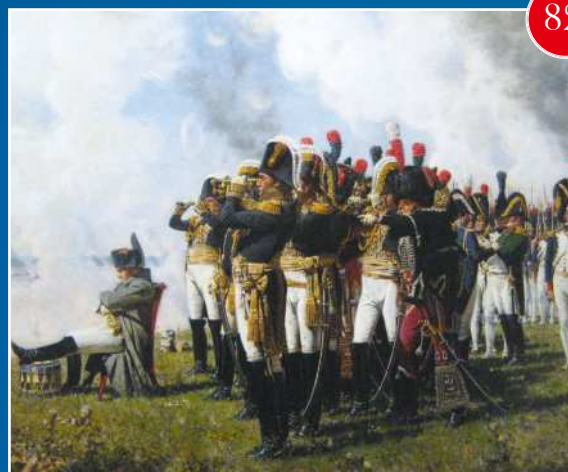
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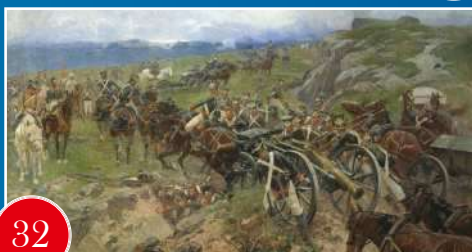
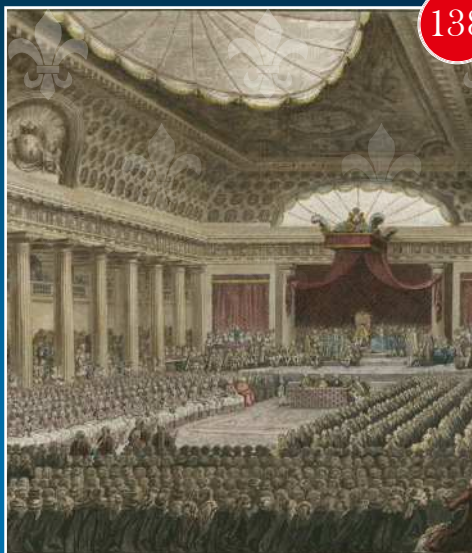
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CRISIS & REVOLUTION: THE AGE OF NAPOLEON

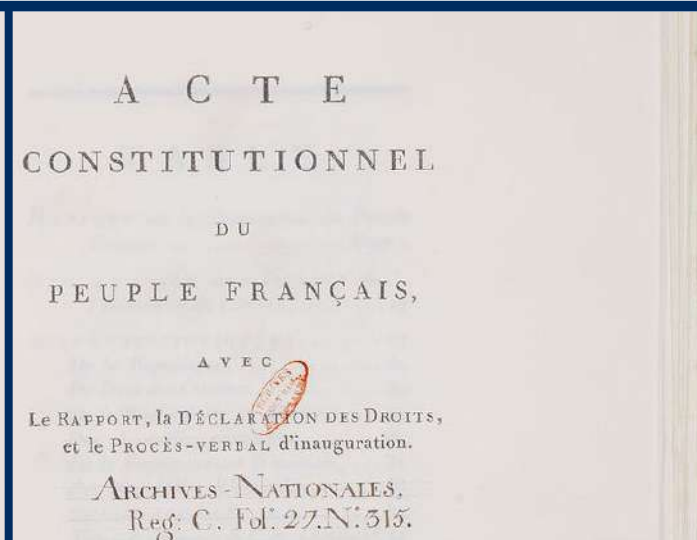
THE INFLUENCE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, AMID
MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF REVOLUTION, TURMOIL AND
WARFARE, SHAPED THE FUTURE OF FRANCE



KING LOUIS XVI CONVENES THE ESTATES-GENERAL

5 MAY - 20 JUNE 1789 - VERSAILLES

In the vain hope of solving the financial crisis that threatens the stability of France, King Louis XVI convenes the Estates-General. The legislative body, which includes three estates or classes – the clergy, nobility and commoners – has not met since 1614. Immediately discussions ensue as to how the voting will be conducted. After assertions that each estate will receive a single vote, allowing the clergy and nobility to maintain control, the commoners of the third estate object and form the National Assembly, representative of the people, and invite the other two estates to join. The king opposes the formation of the National Assembly and closes the Salle des États, the building where the National Assembly has convened. In response the National Assembly adjourns to a nearby tennis court and proclaims an oath that it will not separate until a constitution has been established for the nation. The French Revolution is underway.



ACTE CONSTITUTIONNEL DU PEUPLE FRANÇAIS,

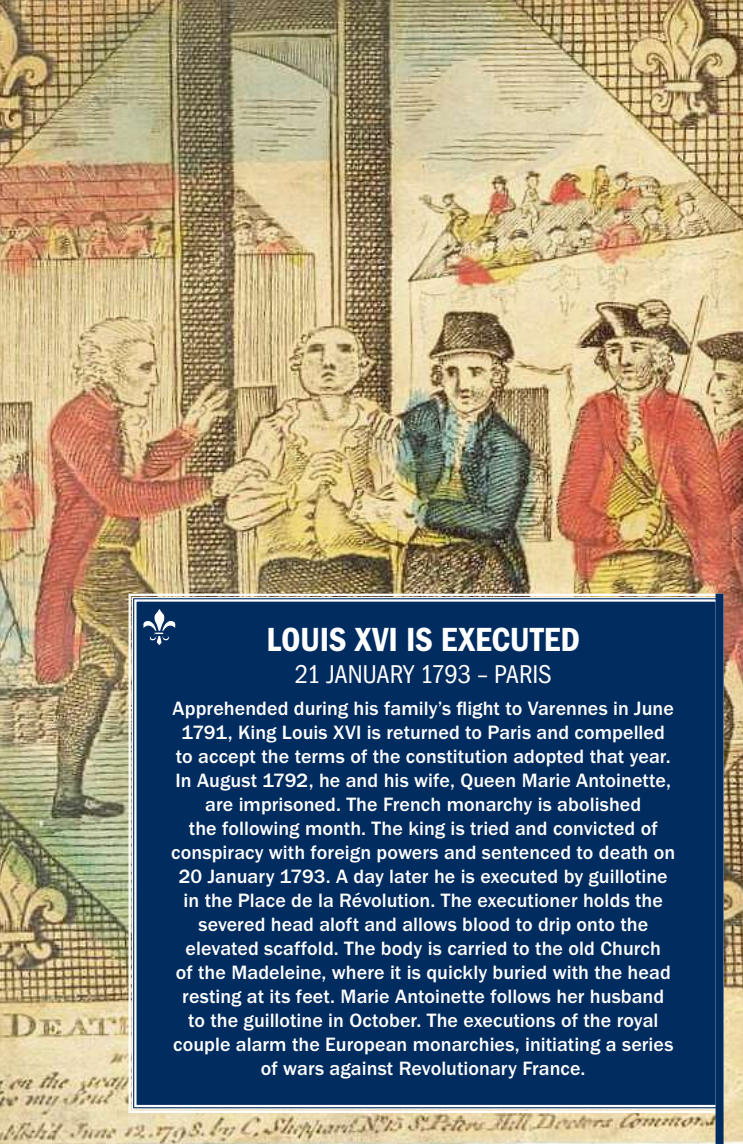
AVEC
Le RAPPORT, la DÉCLARATION DES DROITS,
et le PROCÈS-VERBAL d'inauguration.

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PROCLAMATION OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC 10 AUGUST 1792 - PARIS

The National Convention proclaims the formation of the First Republic and strips all powers from King Louis XVI, who is then referred to by his family surname, Capet. The Convention sets the stage for the establishment of the Committee of Public Safety the following April as the government wrestles with war against other European powers, continuing civil unrest and shortages of food. The Committee of Public Safety is seen as an emergency government, and the tenets of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen published in 1789 are suspended temporarily. Within a year the Convention announces the drafting of the Constitution of 1793, which is then approved by a wide margin during a popular vote in August.



LOUIS XVI IS EXECUTED

21 JANUARY 1793 - PARIS

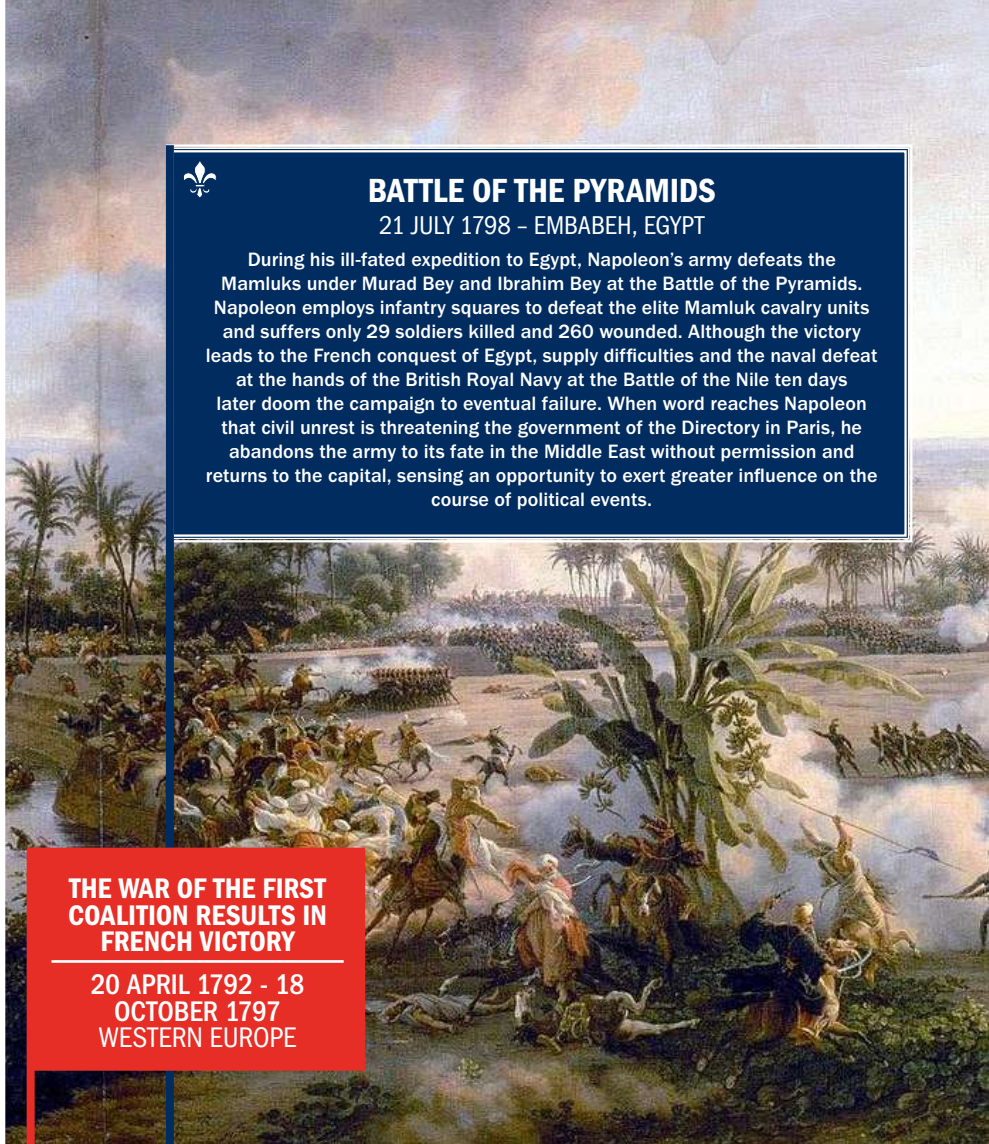
Apprehended during his family's flight to Varennes in June 1791, King Louis XVI is returned to Paris and compelled to accept the terms of the constitution adopted that year. In August 1792, he and his wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, are imprisoned. The French monarchy is abolished the following month. The king is tried and convicted of conspiracy with foreign powers and sentenced to death on 20 January 1793. A day later he is executed by guillotine in the Place de la Révolution. The executioner holds the severed head aloft and allows blood to drip onto the elevated scaffold. The body is carried to the old Church of the Madeleine, where it is quickly buried with the head resting at its feet. Marie Antoinette follows her husband to the guillotine in October. The executions of the royal couple alarm the European monarchies, initiating a series of wars against Revolutionary France.



BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

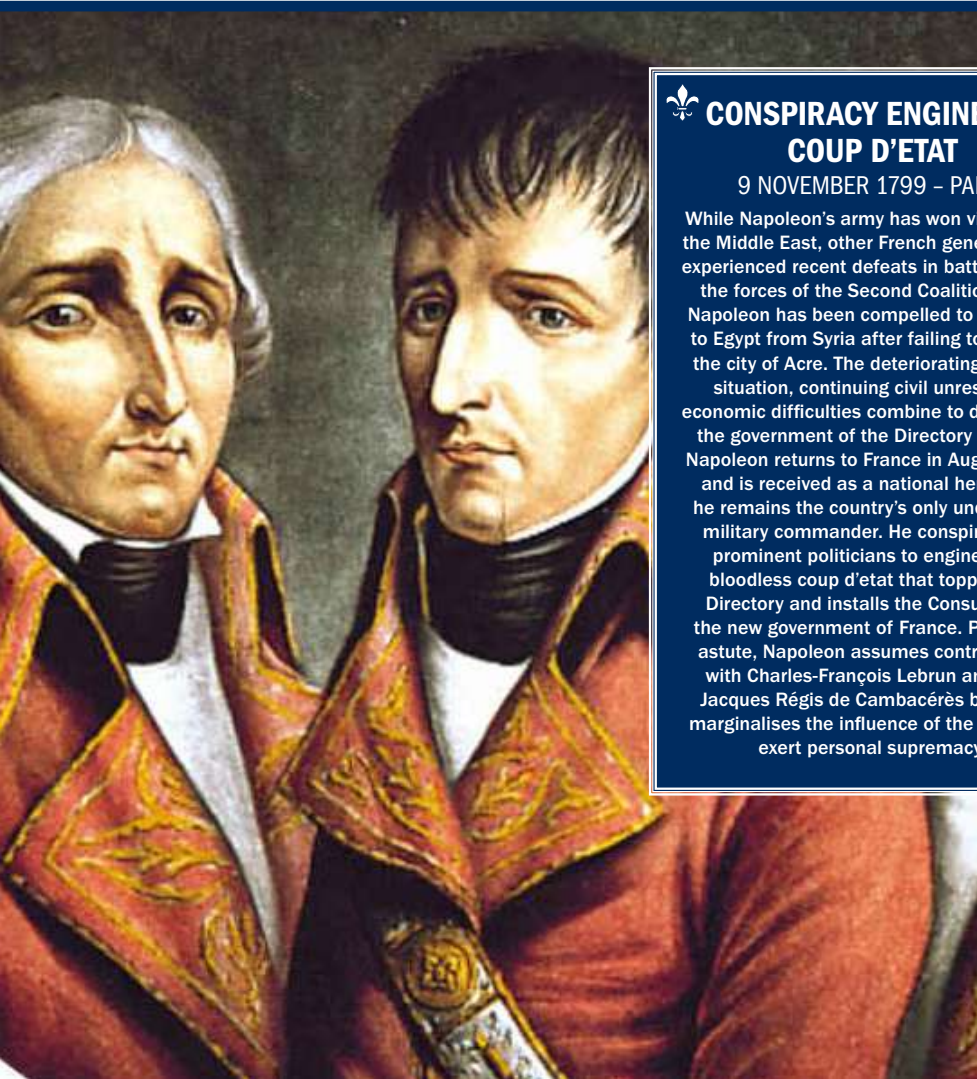
21 JULY 1798 - EMBABEH, EGYPT

During his ill-fated expedition to Egypt, Napoleon's army defeats the Mamluks under Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey at the Battle of the Pyramids. Napoleon employs infantry squares to defeat the elite Mamluk cavalry units and suffers only 29 soldiers killed and 260 wounded. Although the victory leads to the French conquest of Egypt, supply difficulties and the naval defeat at the hands of the British Royal Navy at the Battle of the Nile ten days later doom the campaign to eventual failure. When word reaches Napoleon that civil unrest is threatening the government of the Directory in Paris, he abandons the army to its fate in the Middle East without permission and returns to the capital, sensing an opportunity to exert greater influence on the course of political events.



THE WAR OF THE FIRST COALITION RESULTS IN FRENCH VICTORY

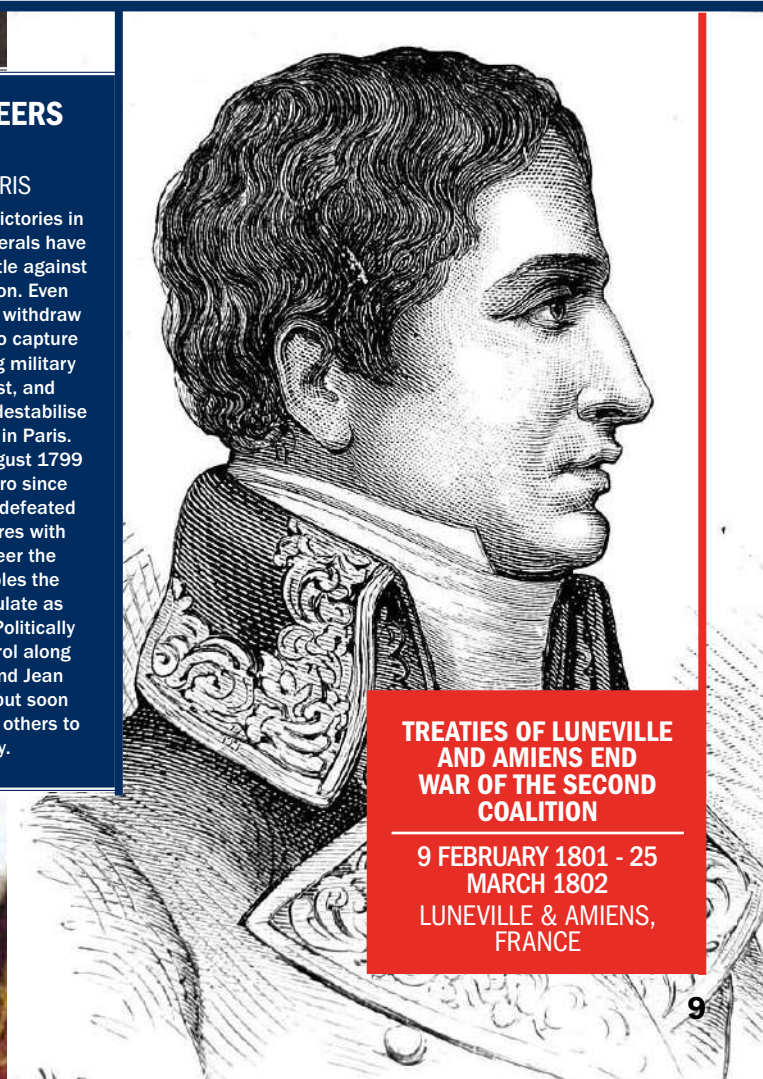
20 APRIL 1792 - 18 OCTOBER 1797
WESTERN EUROPE



CONSPIRACY ENGINEERS COUP D'ETAT

9 NOVEMBER 1799 - PARIS

While Napoleon's army has won victories in the Middle East, other French generals have experienced recent defeats in battle against the forces of the Second Coalition. Even Napoleon has been compelled to withdraw to Egypt from Syria after failing to capture the city of Acre. The deteriorating military situation, continuing civil unrest, and economic difficulties combine to destabilise the government of the Directory in Paris. Napoleon returns to France in August 1799 and is received as a national hero since he remains the country's only undefeated military commander. He conspires with prominent politicians to engineer the bloodless coup d'etat that topples the Directory and installs the Consulate as the new government of France. Politically astute, Napoleon assumes control along with Charles-François Lebrun and Jean Jacques Régis de Cambacérès but soon marginalises the influence of the others to exert personal supremacy.



TREATIES OF LUNEVILLE AND AMIENS END WAR OF THE SECOND COALITION

9 FEBRUARY 1801 - 25 MARCH 1802
LUNEVILLE & AMIENS, FRANCE



GREAT BRITAIN DECLARES WAR ON FRANCE

18 MAY 1803 - LONDON

In the event that, for many historians, signals the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars, Great Britain renounces the Treaty of Amiens that ended the War of the Second Coalition and brought about a brief cessation of hostilities and declares war on France. The British are concerned with continuing French intervention in Italy and Switzerland and the refusal of Napoleon to withdraw from the Netherlands. Napoleon has annexed the Piedmont region of Italy and the island of Elba and proclaimed himself president of a puppet state established in northern Italy. Despite the terms of the treaty, the French also continue to disrupt British trade with continental Europe and to diminish British influence with other European countries. Britain has refused to evacuate the island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea and establishes a naval blockade of France.



BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ

2 DECEMBER 1805

AUSTERLITZ, AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

In the greatest victory of his illustrious military career, Napoleon routs the armies of Russia and the Holy Roman Empire commanded by Tsar Alexander I and Emperor Francis II respectively. Initially outnumbered, Napoleon displays tactical brilliance, allowing his right and left flanks to hold off attacks from larger Allied forces. At the critical moment, he seizes the opportunity, ordering an assault against the enemy centre on the Pratzen Heights. Twenty thousand French troops break through, and Napoleon commits another 25,000 reserves to the attack. The Allied armies are split and defeated in detail both north and south.

While Napoleon loses approximately 9,000 killed and wounded, Allied dead total around 15,000, while between 10,000 and 20,000 are captured. The French victory at Austerlitz, also known as the Battle of the Three Emperors, brings the War of the Third Coalition to a swift conclusion with the Treaty of Pressburg.



NAPOLEON IS CROWNED EMPEROR OF FRANCE

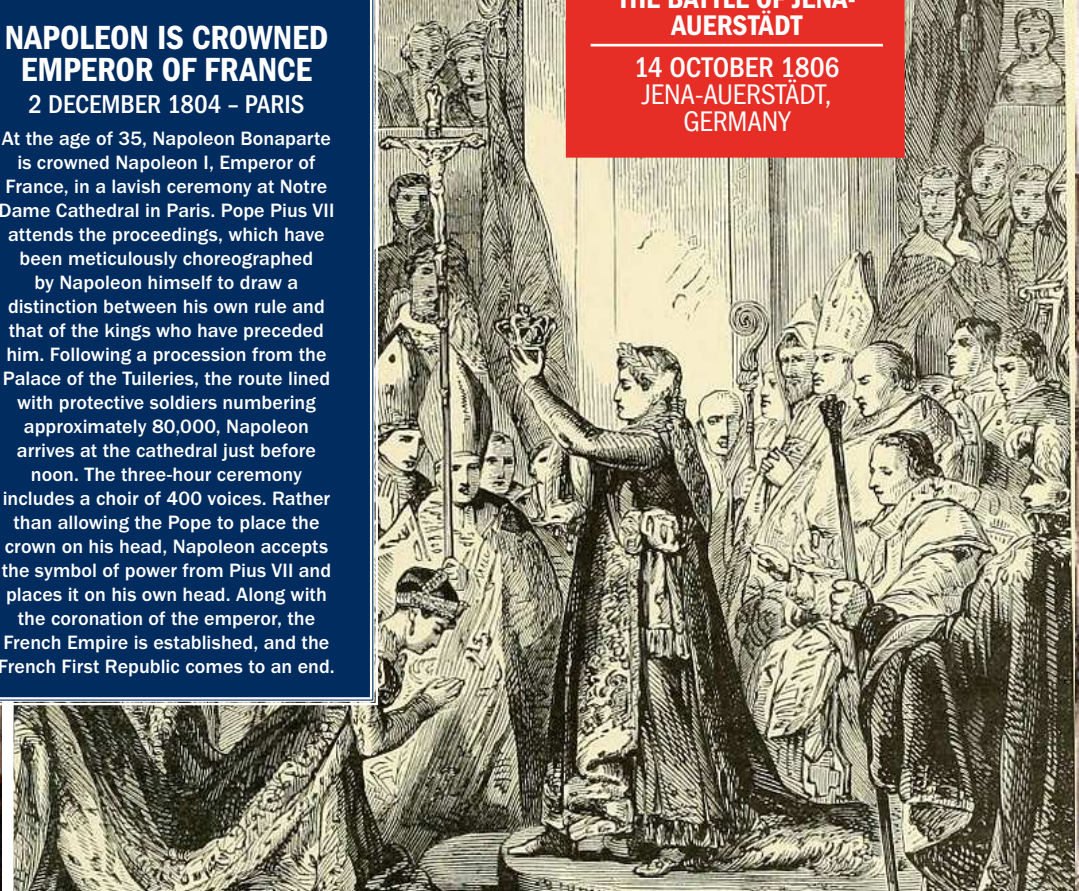
2 DECEMBER 1804 - PARIS

At the age of 35, Napoleon Bonaparte is crowned Napoleon I, Emperor of France, in a lavish ceremony at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Pope Pius VII attends the proceedings, which have been meticulously choreographed by Napoleon himself to draw a distinction between his own rule and that of the kings who have preceded him. Following a procession from the Palace of the Tuileries, the route lined with protective soldiers numbering approximately 80,000, Napoleon arrives at the cathedral just before noon. The three-hour ceremony includes a choir of 400 voices. Rather than allowing the Pope to place the crown on his head, Napoleon accepts the symbol of power from Pius VII and places it on his own head. Along with the coronation of the emperor, the French Empire is established, and the French First Republic comes to an end.



NAPOLEON DEFEATS THE PRUSSIAN ARMY AT THE BATTLE OF JENA-AUERSTÄDT

14 OCTOBER 1806
JENA-AUERSTÄDT, GERMANY





NAPOLEON WINS AN INCONCLUSIVE VICTORY AT BORODINO

7 SEPTEMBER 1812
BORODINO, RUSSIA

During the bloodiest single day of fighting in the Napoleonic Wars, the French Grand Armée wins a tactical victory, but the Russian Army, under Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, is able to withdraw rather than being destroyed. More than 70,000 dead and wounded lie on the field when the battle is over. The defence of Moscow is compromised, and Napoleon marches into the Russian capital a week later. However, Tsar Alexander I does not surrender, and his army remains a viable fighting force. The Russian scorched earth policy has deprived the French Army of sustenance, and by October Napoleon is compelled to begin the long march back to France, which destroys his army as a fighting force. After the disastrous campaign, in which another 400,000 French soldiers are lost, Napoleon must raise another army as Austria and Prussia exit their imposed alliance with France, triggering the War of the Sixth Coalition.

NAPOLEON INVADES THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

27 OCTOBER 1807
SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

NAPOLEON INVADES RUSSIA

24 JUNE 1812
NEMAN RIVER, RUSSIA

THE BERLIN DECREE ESTABLISHES THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

21 NOVEMBER 1806
BERLIN, GERMANY

Following his resounding victory at Jena-Auerstädt during the War of the Fourth Coalition, Napoleon issues the Berlin Decree, restricting all European territory under the control of France from trading with Great Britain. Even mail service is suspended. The goal of the decree is to initiate the Continental System, an embargo of trade against the British Isles, and cripple the British economy. The embargo is partially successful in response to an ongoing British naval blockade of French ports; however, significant smuggling occurs. British goods enter the European continent through Spain and Russia, prompting Napoleon to mount invasions of these countries. Although the British economy does suffer under the Continental System, it also adversely affects the economies of France and those nations under Napoleon's control, contributing to the eventual downfall of French hegemony in Europe.

NAPOLEON DEFEATS THE AUSTRIANS AT WAGRAM, HASTENING THE END OF THE WAR OF THE FIFTH COALITION

5-6 JULY 1809
WAGRAM, AUSTRIA



THE ALLIES DEFEAT NAPOLEON AT THE BATTLE OF THE NATIONS

16-19 OCTOBER 1813 – LEIPZIG, GERMANY

In the largest battle in Europe prior to World War I, Napoleon's army is decisively defeated on the battlefield for the first time in the Battle of the Nations, also known as the Battle of Leipzig. More than 600,000 troops take part, and over 100,000 are killed or wounded. The armies of Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden, partners in the Sixth Coalition, outnumber the French, but on the first day of fighting Napoleon is nearly successful in dividing the enemy forces as planned. His own changing tactical focus, however, contributes to failure in the attempt. As Napoleon re-deploys his troops on the second day, the Coalition armies grow in strength. On the decisive third day, Napoleon is forced to retreat from Germany. The French have also suffered setbacks in the Peninsular War and are falling back there as well.



NAPOLEON ARRIVES ON THE ISLAND OF ELBA

30 MAY 1814 – ISLAND OF ELBA

At the end of May, Napoleon arrives on the island of Elba, his place of exile just 20 kilometres off the coast of Tuscany in the Mediterranean. A suicide attempt is unsuccessful prior to his departure from France.

During his 'rule', he issues orders to improve farming, organises an army and navy, and revises the legal and educational systems on the island of 12,000 inhabitants. The Bourbon monarchy is restored in France; however, its stability is questionable. Rumours of Napoleon's removal to an island far out in the Atlantic are worrisome, and he is plunged into depression with the news that his first wife, Empress Josephine, has died. On 26 February 1815, after only 270 days in exile, Napoleon escapes from Elba with 700 loyal followers, setting foot in France at the resort town of Golfe-Juan on the southern coast.

He begins marching northward toward Paris.



THE TREATY OF FONTAINEBLEAU ENDS NAPOLEON'S REIGN

11 APRIL 1814
FONTAINEBLEAU, FRANCE

Following the defeat at Leipzig, Napoleon returns to Paris to defend against an invasion that is sure to come. In the spring of 1814, Coalition armies invade France from the Iberian Peninsula, crossing the Pyrenees Mountains, and strike across the Rhine from Central Europe. The Coalition forces ultimately occupy Paris and intend to crush Napoleon's ambitions for good. The Treaty of Fontainebleau strips Napoleon of all his powers. He is exiled to the island of Elba, which is established as a principality under his rule. He is allowed to procure an accompanying guard of 400 soldiers. Napoleon and his wife, Marie-Louise, are permitted to retain their titles of emperor and empress; however, there will be no line of Bonaparte succession to the French throne. Britain refuses to sign the treaty, fearing it does not ensure that Napoleon is finished.

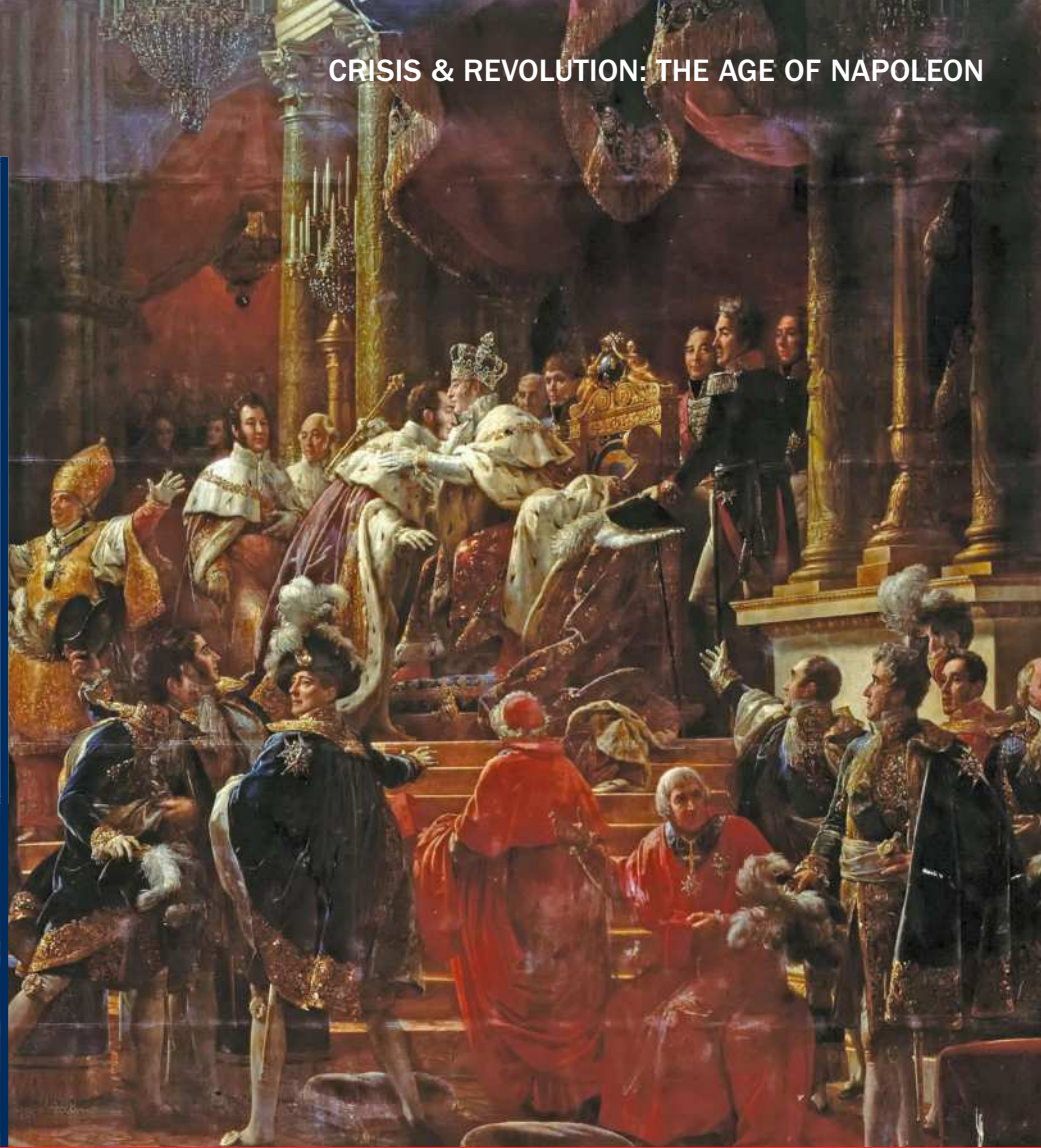




THE HOUSE OF BOURBON RETURNS TO THE THRONE OF FRANCE

6 APRIL 1814 - 29 JULY 1830 - PARIS

After Napoleon is exiled to Elba, the Bourbon Restoration reinstates the French monarchy. Louis XVIII, brother of the executed Louis XVI, is crowned king on 6 April 1814, but his reign is interrupted by Napoleon's Hundred Days. Louis XVIII takes the throne again on 8 July 1815. The monarchy, however, is no longer absolute. Many of the principles of the French Revolution remain, and the government has become a constitutional monarchy. The Charter of 1814, a constitution granted by the king, defines the powers of the monarch. The Napoleonic Code is retained, and certain rights of the people such as equal justice before the law and freedom of the press are instilled. The reign of Louis XVIII lasts until his death in the autumn of 1824, and he is succeeded by his brother, Charles X, whose abdication following the July Revolution of 1830 ends the Bourbon Restoration.



NAPOLEON IS VANQUISHED AT WATERLOO

18 JUNE 1815
WATERLOO, BELGIUM

French troops rally to Napoleon, and he reaches Paris on 20 March 1815, with virtually no interference from royalists he encounters during his march. The Congress of Vienna, convened to determine a peaceful future for Europe following years of warfare, labels him an outlaw.

Swiftly, the Seventh Coalition forms, determined to defeat Napoleon whose army has grown to more than 70,000 soldiers. With this newly constituted

Army of the North he hopes to defeat the forces of Great Britain and Prussia before they are able to join forces against him. In mid-June, the British Army commanded by the Duke of Wellington and the Prussian Army under Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher decisively defeat Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo, 15 kilometres south of the Belgian capital of Brussels. The so-called Hundred Days of Napoleon's resurgence end abruptly. He is forced to abdicate a second time and is exiled to the island of St Helena, where he dies on 5 May 1821.





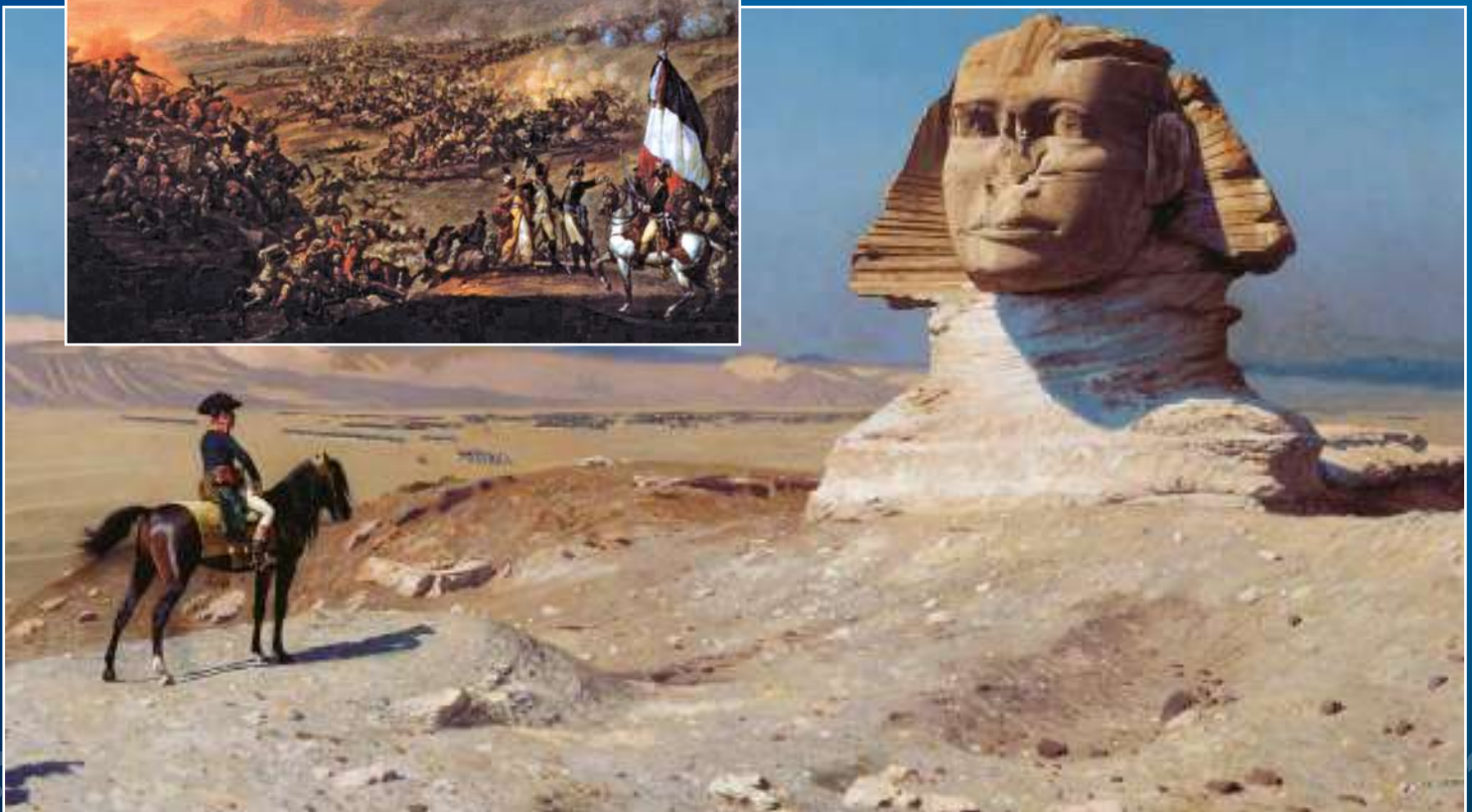
BONAPARTE RISING

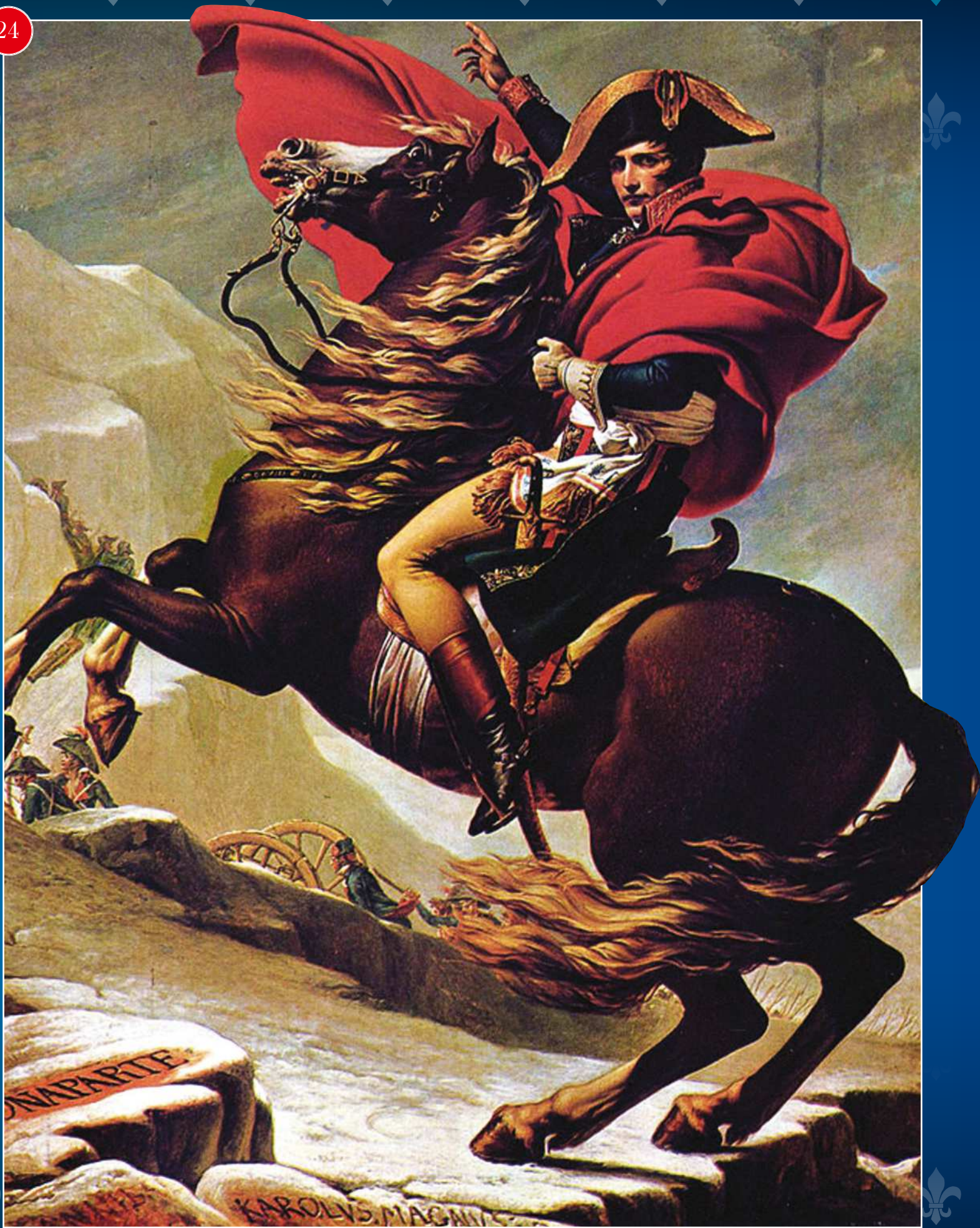
Amid the chaos and terror of the French Revolution, a young general from Corsica emerged to shape the nation in his image

16 The star of
Napoleon ascendant

24 Europe in upheaval

16





THE STAR OF NAPOLEON ASCENDANT

A ONCE OBSCURE ARMY OFFICER BORN ON THE ISLAND OF CORSICA ROSE TO BECOME A GREAT CONQUEROR AND EMPEROR OF FRANCE



Napoleon Bonaparte once said succinctly, "I found the crown of France in the gutter, and I picked it up."

In this instance, the emperor's comment was a supreme understatement. Perhaps the finest example of the self-made man of the 19th century, Napoleon did indeed rise from obscurity through the ranks of the French Army, navigating a maze of political intrigue, to become the foremost military strategist, tactician, and conqueror of his time, and to take on the mantle of Emperor of France.

Napoleon's ascent to the dizzying heights of power is a remarkable, sometimes miraculous, and always fascinating thread that wove its way through world history for more than 30 years and continues to reverberate today. As with many men who rise to greatness, Napoleon was the beneficiary of turbulent times and sweeping political change, he was fortunate to receive an education beyond that of the common people, and he was possessed of tremendous intellect and driving ambition.

Napoleon was born in the town of Ajaccio, capital of the island of Corsica, on August 15, 1769. Just a year earlier, the Kingdom of Genoa

had ceded Corsica to France. Had Napoleon been born a few months sooner, he would have grown up an Italian rather than a French citizen. His parents were of the minor nobility, and his father, Carlo Buonaparte, served as the island's representative to the court of French King Louis XVI. His mother, Letizia Ramolino, was a strict disciplinarian and the foremost influence on the life of the young Napoleon. Although he was born Napoleone di Buonaparte, by the time he reached his 20s, he had changed his name to a more French spelling and pronunciation with Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon was the second of seven children to survive beyond infancy. A boy and girl had died young, and one older brother, Joseph, preceded him. Napoleon studied at a Catholic school in the French city of Autun. He and Joseph travelled there in early 1779 in company with their father, who was en route to the French court at the Palace of Versailles.

It was often customary in society at the time for the second son of a noble family to pursue a career in the military. After only four months in Autun, Napoleon was accepted to the military academy at the town of Brienne-le-Chateau, where he studied for the next four years as his father was able to secure a scholarship

"NAPOLEON'S ASCENT TO THE DIZZYING HEIGHTS OF POWER IS A REMARKABLE, SOMETIMES MIRACULOUS, AND ALWAYS FASCINATING THREAD THAT WOVE ITS WAY THROUGH WORLD HISTORY FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS"

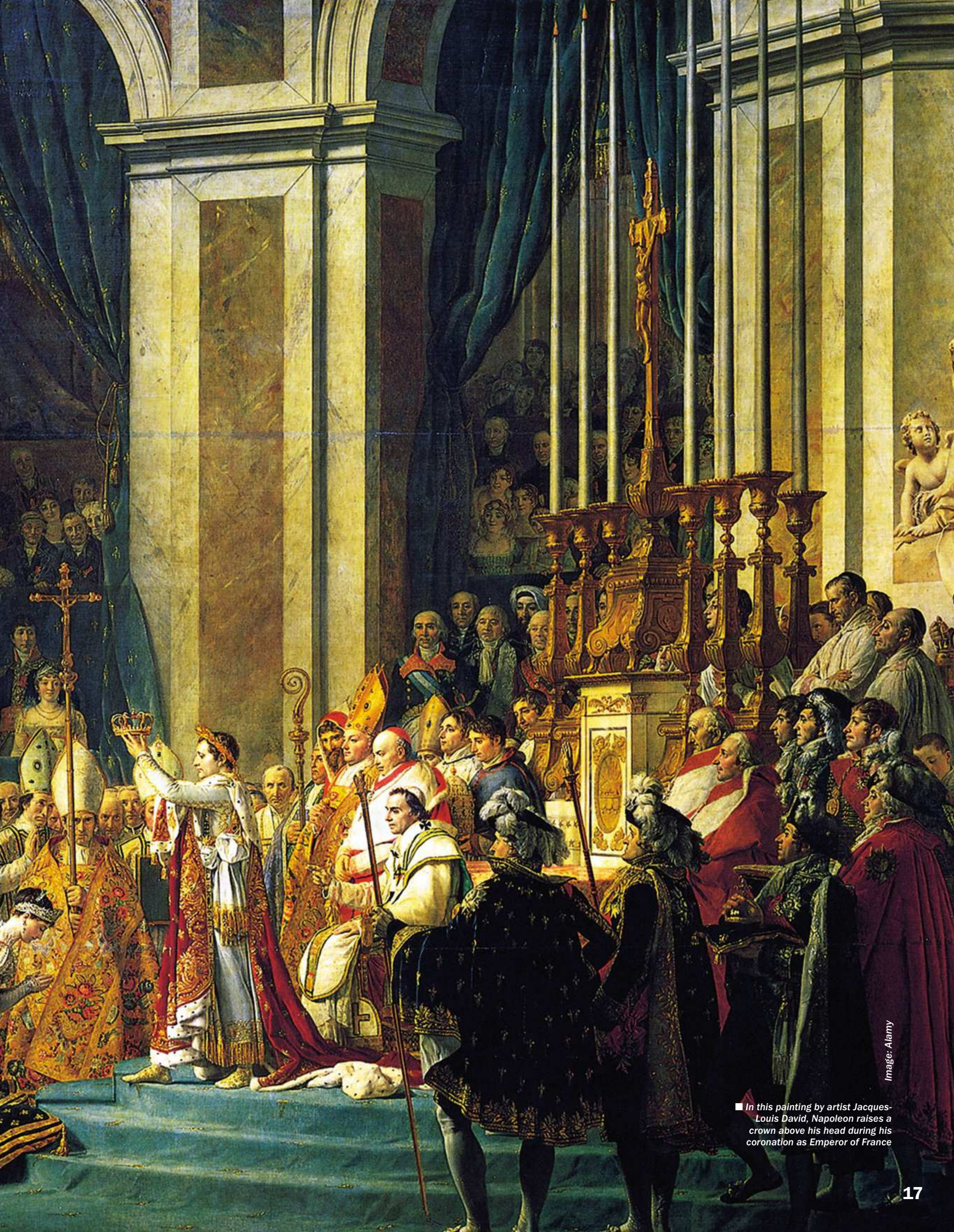


Image: Alamy

■ In this painting by artist Jacques-Louis David, Napoleon raises a crown above his head during his coronation as Emperor of France

BONAPARTE RISING

to finance his education. Napoleon spoke Corsican as his first language and learned French during his schooling in the country.

After graduating from the Brienne military academy, Napoleon entered the École Militaire, the elite military academy located in the French capital of Paris. His father's untimely death in February 1785 brought financial hardship, placing further education in jeopardy. However, Napoleon exhibited several of those innate personality traits that would serve him well in later life. He was focused, intense, self-disciplined, and possessed incredible energy. Although he enjoyed being alone, he also cultivated friendships at the École Militaire. He was a meticulous planner, rarely leaving anything to chance in preparations for examinations or other activities.

Initially, Napoleon aspired to be a naval officer; however, an aptitude for mathematics pushed him toward the artillery. Out of necessity, he completed the school's two-year program in just one year, ranking a rather unimpressive 42nd in a class of 58 graduates.

The first Corsican to graduate from the prestigious École Militaire, Napoleon was commissioned a second lieutenant in the La Fère Regiment of artillery at the age of 16. Still, due to his somewhat low social status, the prospects for advancement were rather dismal. The rigid class structure of Bourbon France was a formidable barrier to promotion.

While the spark of the French Revolution smoldered, Napoleon completed further training in the city of Auxonne, where the French Army's artillery school was located. He was ordered to the town of Valence in southeastern France, where there was little activity related to his military vocation. He spent long hours reading, educating himself on the political landscape of the day, and absorbing great volumes of history, geography, and philosophy.

Napoleon took extended leaves from the army during a two-year period, visiting Paris and returning to his native Corsica. He was, no doubt, keenly aware of the political unrest that was emerging in France at the time. The poor, working class population of the country, particularly in its major cities, had become disenchanted and angry with its continuing exploitation by an aristocracy that lived in the lap of luxury, distant and apparently looking upon the common people with disdain.

PATRIOTISM, POLITICS, AND OPPORTUNITY

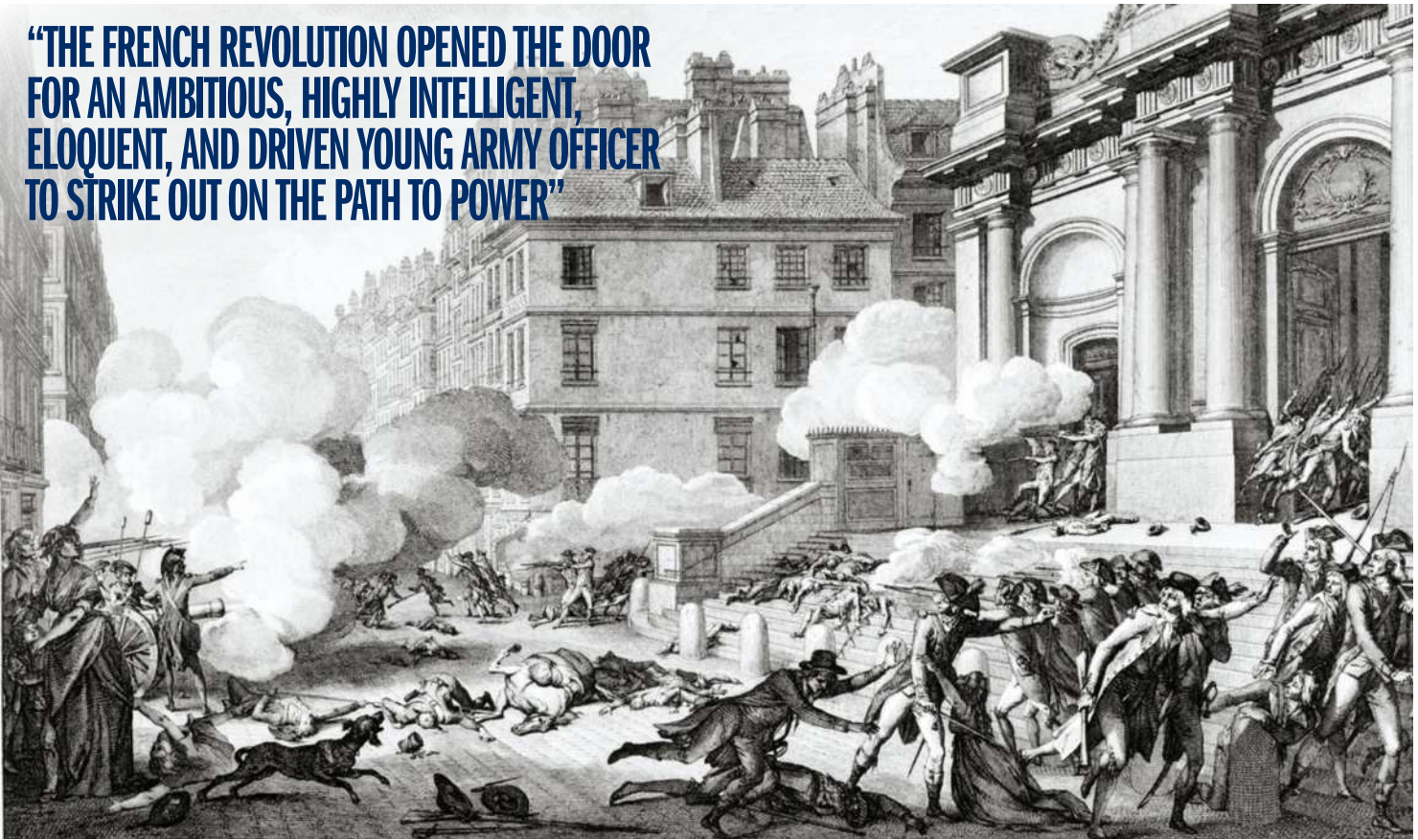
Perhaps Napoleon's personal experience on the fringe of the French nobility, where his own career path was obviously limited, his continuing self-education, and his strong

**"30,000 FRENCHMEN WERE
VOMITED ONTO OUR SHORES,
DROWNING THE THRONE OF
LIBERTY IN WAVES OF BLOOD"**



■ At the height of his power, Emperor Napoleon I of France poses in his study in the Tuilleries Palace

“THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OPENED THE DOOR FOR AN AMBITIOUS, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, ELOQUENT, AND DRIVEN YOUNG ARMY OFFICER TO STRIKE OUT ON THE PATH TO POWER”



■ Troops and artillery under the command of Napoleon crush a royalist assault on the French revolutionary government in the streets of Paris

NAPOLEON AND THE CHURCH

The famed French leader acknowledged the significant role religion played in the lives of the people

Although Napoleon Bonaparte believed that the Roman Catholic Church favoured the Catholic monarchy of Austria over the revolutionary government of France, he never disavowed the institution and recognised its prominent role in the fabric of society. Napoleon was born and baptised Catholic, remained Catholic his entire life, and received the last rights of the church on his deathbed. Wherever he led conquering armies, Napoleon proved pragmatic and tolerant, respectful of different religious customs and allowing the native population to continue its practices without interference.

Nevertheless, Napoleon's personal religious views seem somewhat contradictory. Driven by insatiable ambition, he had gained an empire through force. Yet, later in life he is said to have admired the ability of Jesus Christ to influence the course of world events so profoundly with a message of love and salvation. Despite his Catholic upbringing, he once remarked, “All religions have been made by men.” Therefore, it is likely that Napoleon considered the freedom to express religion as a tool to extend control of the masses, contributing to his ultimate goal of building an unrivalled empire.

Scholars, however, remain divided as to whether Napoleon nurtured a real faith in God or simply used his ancestral bond to the Catholic Church to advance his agenda of conquest.

■ Pope Pius VII reigned from 1800 to 1823 and witnessed the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor of France



attachment to his native island home cultivated an inherent Corsican nationalism in the young officer. In May 1789, before he had turned 20 years of age, he was a committed, ardent proponent of an independent Corsica and wrote an impassioned letter to Pasquale Paoli, the president of the Executive Council of the General Diet of the People of Corsica.

“As the nation was perishing I was born,” Napoleon wrote. “30,000 Frenchmen were vomited onto our shores, drowning the throne of liberty in waves of blood. Such was the odious sight which was the first to strike me.”

In that same month, the discontent of the French people erupted in violent revolution. In Paris, the middle class moved to form a National Assembly that openly confronted the French monarchy, the aristocracy, and the administration of the Roman Catholic Church. Within weeks, an angry mob stormed the Bastille in Paris, prisoners were freed from their cells, and civil unrest spread rapidly.

Meanwhile, Napoleon engaged in the clash of rival factions in Corsica. Nationalists, radicals, and royalists vied for control of the island. Although he had supported an independent Corsica, the young officer disagreed with Paoli and began to lean toward a more democratic group, the Jacobins. Paoli, however, continued to advocate a complete severance of ties with France.

By 1792, the French monarchy had been toppled and the nation had been declared a republic. Despite the fact that he had spent long periods away from the army and actually led violent demonstrations against French

troops in Corsica, Napoleon was promoted to captain in the French Army and returned to his regiment in the city of Nice. In June 1793, six months after King Louis XVI was publicly executed in the Place de la Révolution in Paris, the entire Bonaparte family fled its homeland and settled on the French mainland.

The French Revolution opened the door for an ambitious, highly intelligent, eloquent, and driven young army officer to strike out on the path to power. The Jacobin-inspired Reign of Terror, meant to exert control over a country wracked by revolution, counter-revolution, and rioting in the streets, also contributed to the removal of much of the aristocratic senior officer caste of the French Army. Further, the overthrow of the Bourbon Dynasty threatened the security and stability of the remaining monarchies of Europe.

As pangs of fear struck the hearts of rulers across the continent, the logical course of action appeared to be a military move against the French revolutionary government, a campaign that would restore the House of Bourbon to the French throne, quiet the upheaval in France, and squelch the ideas of political and social redress that had become so troublesome.

In 1792, the First Coalition, a loose alliance of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and other countries went to war against the French First Republic. Destitute of experienced senior military commanders and with its ranks populated by many soldiers who had little training, discipline, or experience, the French Army needed capable leadership. Conditions

were becoming increasingly favourable for the rise of Napoleon.

In the summer of 1793, the young captain of artillery was posted to the city of Toulon on the Mediterranean coast. A powerful British fleet had sailed into the harbour, supporting an uprising of royalist sympathizers and effectively allowing ground forces to take control of the city. During the fighting in Toulon, the captain of the French artillery was wounded.

Through the influence of Antoine Saliceti, a political officer who had accompanied the army to Toulon and happened also to be a fellow Corsican and friend of the Bonaparte family, Napoleon was given command of the artillery in the city.

Meanwhile, commanders who were senior to Napoleon were proving themselves weak and inadequate. Napoleon's friendship with Saliceti and his contact with the governing Committee of Public Safety in Paris, including the powerful Augustin Robespierre, brought tacit approval for the young commander of artillery to prosecute the military effort at Toulon despite the protests of General Jean Baptiste Francois Carteaux, the nominal officer in command.

Napoleon was promoted to the rank of major in September. His quick grasp of the tactical situation compelled him to write to the leaders in Paris that his superiors at Toulon were "a bunch of fools." Napoleon believed that the key to driving the British fleet from the harbour lay in capturing nearby heights and two fortifications, l'Eguillette and Balaguier. From there, the enemy warships would be within range of French guns and compelled to evacuate the harbour.

Carteaux had agreed but insisted on retaining command of the initial assault against British positions on the high ground. The attack was uninspired and ineffective. After the failure, Bonaparte assumed control of the continuing effort to take the key positions. Within days, Napoleon had constructed artillery emplacements to bombard the British fortifications. Then, on December 16, he led another assault against the strong points.

During the attack, Napoleon received a serious bayonet wound in the thigh. Nevertheless, the objectives were captured, the enemy fleet withdrew from Toulon harbour, and the young lieutenant of artillery received tremendous praise for his conduct of the operation. He was rewarded with a great leap forward in rank, promotion to brigadier general at the age of only 24.

JACOBINS, JEOPARDY, AND TRIUMPH

By the spring of 1794, Napoleon had been elevated to command of the artillery of the Army of Italy, then battling Austria and the Kingdom of Sardinia in the mountains of northern Italy. Napoleon planned an offensive that would lead to a significant victory against the First Coalition at the Battle of Saorgio in April. The success of the campaign that followed forced the Austrians and Sardinians to sign a treaty with the French the following month.

The political situation in Paris remained in turmoil, however, and in July 1794 the Jacobins

THE BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

Napoleon's invading French Army defeated the opposing Mamluk forces and temporarily occupied Egypt

On 21 July 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte exhorted his troops as they went into battle against the Mamluk army commanded by Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey. "Forward! Remember that from those monuments yonder 40 centuries are looking down upon you," he roared. The French victory at the Battle of the Pyramids, fought just a few miles from the ancient wonders and a short distance from the city of Cairo, sealed the temporary conquest of Egypt for France, although the campaign ultimately ended in disaster.

During the battle, Napoleon employed an effective battlefield tactic against the best of the Mamluk army, its strong cavalry formations. The French soldiers formed infantry squares, presenting a solid front against the charging Mamluk horsemen along with concentrated musketry and the points of bayonets.

With the aid of artillery fire, they repulsed multiple Mamluk charges while attacks against a detached French force were repelled as well. French casualties amounted to only 29 killed and 260 wounded, while Mamluk losses are believed to have topped 3,000.

Despite the one-sided victory, Napoleon's hopes of establishing an empire in the Middle East were dashed ten days later with the British Royal Navy's defeat of his fleet at the Battle of the Nile.

■ In this rendition of the Battle of the Pyramids by artist Francois-Louis-Joseph Watteau, an ancient monument looms against a red sky



“AS THE ANGRY ROYALIST MOB APPROACHED THE TUILERIES ON 5 OCTOBER, NAPOLEON DID NOT FLINCH, ORDERING HIS COMMAND TO FIRE. WITHIN MINUTES AS MANY AS 1,400 ROYALISTS LAY DEAD AND DYING IN THE STREET”

were swiftly removed from power during the Thermidorian Reaction. Maximilien Robespierre, the central figure in the Reign of Terror, went to the guillotine, as did his brother Augustin, Napoleon's friend and benefactor. Napoleon, who was in Nice during this period, was placed under house arrest supposedly due to his association with the Robespierre brothers and other Jacobins. He is said to have penned a letter while under arrest, pleading with the National Convention for leniency in the case of his friend Saliceti, who was subsequently acquitted and escaped the guillotine.

Accounts of Napoleon's incarceration vary. Some assert that he was held under house arrest for as little as two weeks. Others state that he was imprisoned for several months, tried, and found guiltless of any crime. In fact, those who judged him were reported to have been impressed with the officer's stellar military record. By 1795, Napoleon had returned to Paris and was assigned to the Bureau of Topography after feigning poor health to avoid an infantry command, a perceived demotion for an officer of artillery, in the Vendée region fighting the royalists.

Although his exploits at Toulon had made Napoleon a national hero, his Jacobin political ties and refusal to serve in the Vendée campaign caused his reputation and career to suffer. He was haunted by financial hardship, and his name was removed from the roll of active general officers.

Once again, it seems that fate played a hand in the fortunes of the ambitious Corsican. On 3 October 1795, hundreds of Parisian royalists took to the streets intent on storming the Tuileries Palace, where the fragile government of the National Convention and the Directory had taken refuge. Paul Barras, a principal participant in the Thermidorian Reaction, remembered Napoleon's triumph at Toulon and placed the discredited general in charge of the defence of the Tuileries. Without hesitation, Napoleon seized the opportunity, ordering a young cavalry officer, Joachim Murat, to marshal troops and cannon for the fight that was to come.

As the angry royalist mob approached the Tuileries on 5 October, Napoleon did not flinch, ordering his command to fire. Within minutes as many as 1,400 royalists lay dead and dying in the street. British historian Thomas Carlyle said the grim task was completed in “a whiff of grapeshot.”

Napoleon earned the gratitude of the National Convention and the Directory along



■ After Napoleon's forces capture the heights surrounding Toulon harbour, British troops and warships evacuate in December 1793



■ Napoleon's father, Carlo Buonaparte, represented the island of Corsica at the court of French King Louis XVI



■ This portrait of Napoleon depicts him as a young lieutenant colonel in command of a battalion of Corsican volunteers



■ Napoleon stands at the centre of the chaos in the National Assembly during the coup d'état of 9 November 1799

with the undying loyalty of Murat, who later became one of his senior commanders. He was soon named Commander of the Interior and placed at the head of the Army of Italy. Simultaneously, a romantic liaison blossomed with Josephine de Beauharnais, an aristocratic widow whose husband had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror and the former mistress of Barras. Napoleon and Josephine were married five months later.

The honeymoon was brief. On 11 March 1796, two days after the couple married, Napoleon set off to take command of the Army of Italy, a fighting force that few military men considered a capable offensive weapon. Poorly equipped, many of the soldiers were without proper uniforms – or even pants. Nevertheless, Napoleon displayed superb organisational skills and initiated a swift campaign against the Austrian Army in Italy. Rapid movement kept the enemy on its heels, and the army of Piedmont, an Austrian ally, was vanquished in just over two weeks.

A string of four successive victories culminated in January 1797 with a decisive triumph at Rivoli, where the Austrians lost 14,000 casualties. The Austrian position in Italy then became untenable, and Napoleon boldly mounted an expedition into the enemy's homeland. After defeating the Austrians at the Battle of Tarvis in March 1797, the French threatened their capital of Vienna. The Austrians made peace overtures and ceded much of northern Italy and the Low Countries to France with the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed in mid-October.

Napoleon's masterstroke against Austria precipitated the collapse of the First Coalition. After the Treaty of Campo Formio, only Great Britain remained as an active opponent of the French armed forces. Soon enough, however, the Second Coalition would rise to challenge the French commander whose military genius was now proven on the battlefield. Napoleon had gained the admiration and loyalty of his troops and acclaim from the French people while earning the nickname of the 'Little Corporal', since he was never far from the fighting.

At the same time, he often took unilateral action, negotiating on his own without the authority of the government in Paris. In the process, he solidified a belief in himself as a man of destiny. Parisian politicians were dazzled with his success but wary of this general who marched confidently with a powerful army at his shoulder.

While Britain remained in opposition, Napoleon devised a daring offensive fraught with risk that might ultimately result in complete victory. The conquest of Egypt was, he reasoned, a stepping stone to threaten British interests in India. The French Army would establish itself in the Middle East and forge an anti-British alliance with Muslim rulers that would inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy.

Napoleon did successfully invade Egypt in early 1798, but the French Navy was unable

■ *Sitting on horseback, Napoleon contemplates the Sphinx during his abortive campaign in Egypt. This painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme was completed in 1868*

THE NAPOLEONIC CODE

The Napoleonic Code serves as the model for bodies of law beyond that of revolutionary France

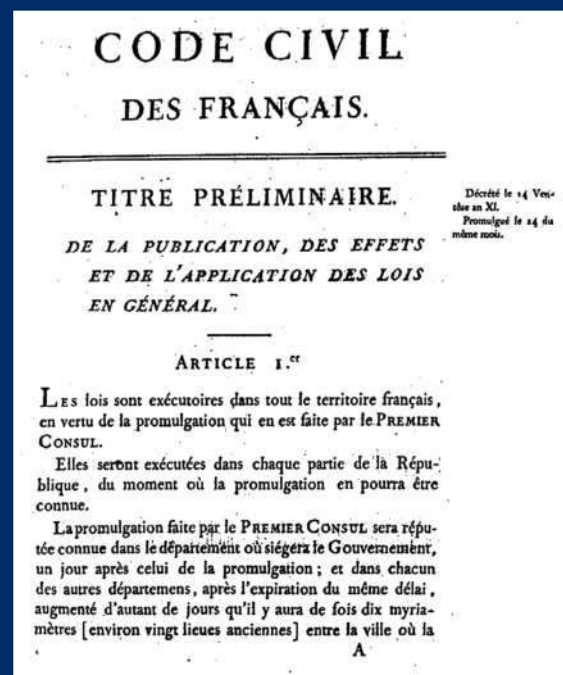
The Napoleonic Code, established in 1804 during the rule of Emperor Napoleon I, embodied an effort to codify in law many of the principles of the French Revolution. Inspired by ancient Roman law developed in the time of Emperor Justinian, the Napoleonic

Code was divided into four sections relating to persons, property, acquisition of property, and civil procedure. It effectively replaced the variety of feudal laws across France with a standardised system. The code promised equality for all people, asserting

that individuals have the right to pursue any type of occupation and ensuring religious freedom. It ended a lengthy system of feudal and royal law that often favoured one party through exemptions, special orders, or privileges.

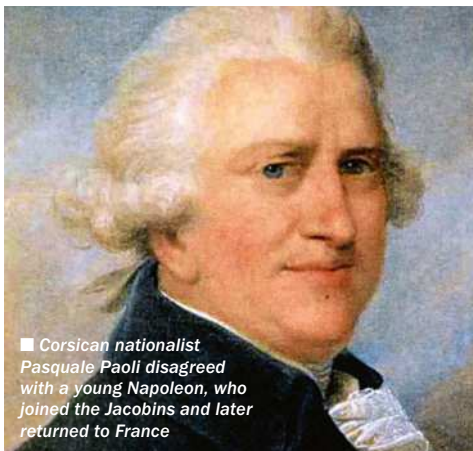
In a clear departure from earlier applications of law in France and throughout much of Europe, the Napoleonic Code clarified legal authority and applied both specific authority and restrictions on judges. Its influence extended beyond France and into the lands that Napoleon conquered. The code was formally adopted in several European countries, including Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Portugal. Drafts of the code were begun as early as 1793 and adopted over a number of years. However, Napoleon pursued the effort with vigour when the Consulate came to power in 1799.

■ *The first page of this 1804 edition of the Napoleonic Code introduces it as the Civil Code of the French*



“NAPOLEON HAD GAINED THE ADMIRATION AND LOYALTY OF HIS TROOPS AND ACCLAIM FROM THE FRENCH PEOPLE WHILE EARNING THE NICKNAME OF THE ‘LITTLE CORPORAL’, SINCE HE WAS NEVER FAR FROM THE FIGHTING”





to exert control of the Mediterranean Sea. It suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Lord Horatio Nelson and the Royal Navy at the Battle of the Nile in August. Subsequently, the French Army in the Middle East was marooned and without a secure supply line. An advance into Syria ended with the failed siege of Acre in 1799.

While his army languished in Egypt, eventually surrendering to the British, Napoleon received word that political unrest had again heated up in Paris. Ever the opportunist, he left the troops to their fate, slipped across the Mediterranean, and joined a conspiracy to overthrow the Directory and to seize power in France.

FROM CONSPIRACY TO CROWN AND EMPIRE

While Napoleon's ill-conceived foray into Egypt foundered, the so-called War of the Second Coalition had gone badly for France in Europe as well. Much of the territorial gains made in Italy had been lost in recent months, and the military reverses contributed to the flagging popularity of the Directory.

By the time Napoleon reached Paris in October 1799, the military situation had somewhat stabilised, but France was virtually bankrupt. It was apparent that government was on the verge of collapse. The Directory had sent orders for Napoleon to return to France to defend the homeland against invasion, but he departed Egypt before those orders arrived. Although he had essentially deserted his post, the Directory was too weak-willed to impose punishment.

Despite the defeat in Egypt, Napoleon continued to enjoy extraordinary popularity with the French people. The time for a coup d'état had arrived, and the conspirators, several members of the Directory among them, approached Napoleon to participate. On 9 November 1799, the conspirators overthrew the Directory, and the event became known as the '18th Brumaire' in reference to the revolutionary calendar.

The government that replaced the Directory was known as the Consulate, a classical reference to the Roman Republic. Along with Napoleon, two former members of the Directory, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès and Pierre-Roger Ducos, joined the military hero as consuls. True to form, however, Napoleon had no taste for cooperative government. Within weeks, the influence of Sieyès and Ducos had been extinguished. Although the government maintained the semblance of a republic, Napoleon was supreme in the role of First Consul.

While he consolidated power in France, giving only a nod through a rigged plebiscite to the representative form of government and political ideals that had been unleashed during the revolution, Napoleon faced a very real external threat. Eager to assert dominance, he moved militarily against the Second Coalition.

Once again, Napoleon advanced toward the Austrians in Italy. At the Battle of Marengo on 14 June 1800, a surprise Austrian attack came within a hair's breadth of inflicting a terrible defeat on Napoleon's army. However, the Austrian commander, General Michael von Melas, assumed that he had broken the French lines and left the details to

"DESPITE THE DEFEAT IN EGYPT, NAPOLEON CONTINUED TO ENJOY EXTRAORDINARY POPULARITY WITH THE FRENCH PEOPLE"

suzerainties. In fact, the French had executed only and tactical withdrawal.

In late afternoon, Napoleon rallied his forces and executed a successful counterattack that defeated the Austrians and helped further legitimize his hold on political power in Paris. Napoleon returned to his capital in triumph, and an agreement with Austria brought northern Italy, the Netherlands, and lands on the left bank of the great River Rhine into the French fold.

By 1802, a classic military standoff had developed. While Great Britain's Royal Navy ruled the high seas, Napoleon and the French Army were preeminent on land. The two powers signed the Treaty of Amiens on 25 March 1802, each side offering assurances to the other, and a brief, uneasy peace settled across the European continent after ten years of almost constant warfare.

In the same year, Napoleon called for a plebiscite to approve the country's constitution as a means of making the Consulate a permanent governing entity. With overwhelming approval from the people, the plebiscite essentially proclaimed Napoleon First Consul for Life. For a time, Napoleon was afforded the opportunity to manage his country's colonial empire and settle territorial disputes that had plagued the Germanic principalities and free cities for years. Napoleon garnered the loyalty of numerous German princes and noblemen as he gave them additional lands and curtailed the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which he considered somewhat hostile to revolutionary France. To replenish his depleted coffers, he sold the vast Louisiana Territory in North America to the United States for \$15 million in 1803.

Meanwhile, the tenuous peace of Amiens fell apart. By the spring of 1803, Great Britain had again declared war on France. The slow assemblage of the Third Coalition eventually pitted Great Britain, Russia, Sweden, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily against France and allied dominions. The ensuing Napoleonic Wars would ravage Europe until 1815.

Still, Napoleon sought to attain absolute power in France, warning that a movement was afoot to restore the Bourbon monarchy and using failed assassination plots, both real and imagined, to endear himself to the French people. Finally, he asserted that power by proclaiming himself Emperor of France.

At the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on Sunday 2 December 1804, the improbable rise of Napoleon Bonaparte culminated with his coronation as Emperor Napoleon I. Reminiscent of the Caesars of Ancient Rome, the emperor wore a gold laurel wreath. Rather than crowning the monarch, Pope Pius VII was merely a spectator. Napoleon needed no validation beyond his own self-assurance that his destiny had been fulfilled.

EUROPE IN UPHEAVAL

A WAVE OF SOCIAL CHANGE, EMERGING INITIALLY IN FRANCE, THREATENED THE MONARCHIES THAT HAD RULED EUROPE FOR CENTURIES



he spectre of class warfare and revolution in France alarmed the crowned heads of Europe. However, the public execution of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette made their own collective blood run

cold. By the late 18th century, Europe was in turmoil. For centuries royal houses had ruled across the continent, intermarried, formed alliances, traded, built empires, and waged war against one another. Their right to rule had survived for hundreds of years, and now they clung to a rigid social structure with roots in medieval times.

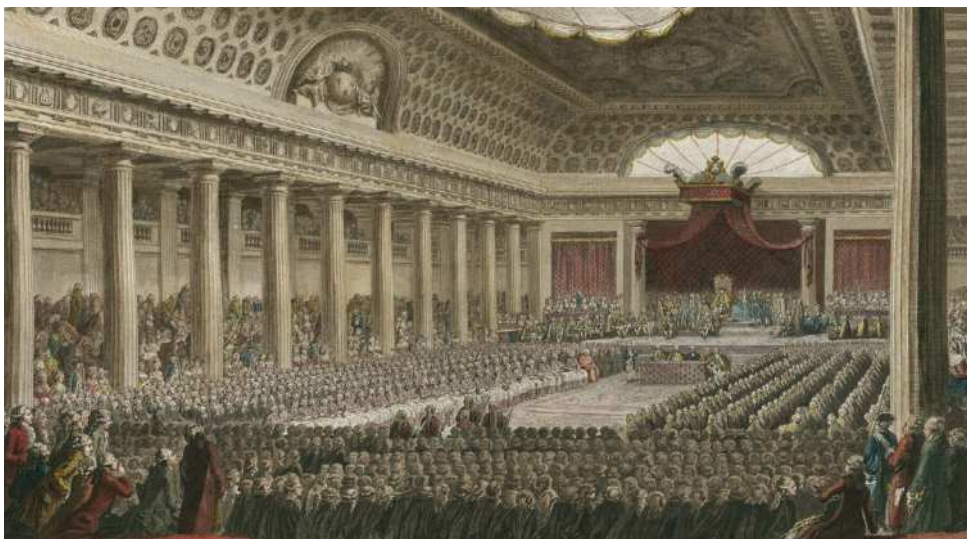
The royal houses of Europe ruled by might, their own interpretation of divine authority, and often with the support of the church. Inevitably, though, the emergence of innovative political and social thought during the Enlightenment, the growing populations of subjugated classes, and the increasingly obvious excesses of the aristocratic caste, raised the discontent of the people to new levels. After all, the workers tilled the land, paid the taxes, fought the wars, and acquiesced to the power of the crown, which often appeared distant and disdainful of the common citizenry.

Nowhere were the excesses of the royals more obvious than in France, where the court of Bourbon King Louis XVI lived lavishly on the backs of the workers. Unlike Britain, where the commoners had a voice in Parliament,

and the upstart republic of the United States, which the French themselves had assisted in obtaining independence, the people of France had no viable means short of demonstration to affect change. While the working classes often lived in abject poverty, the court of King Louis continued its exploitation without reform which, along with the prosecution of costly wars for empire and support of the American Revolution, spent the nation into bankruptcy, a financial oblivion that only worsened the condition of the poor.

At the same time, the latent emergence of the bourgeoisie, a middle class that was neither wealthy nor poor, began to influence the French social strata. This burgeoning middle class remained without political voice or vote; however, its control of the means of production further threatened the economic basis upon which the French monarchy perilously rested. Opposition to the French aristocracy steadily grew throughout the late 1700s, and the storm broke into open revolution in the spring of 1789.

Amid the upheaval of the revolution and the formation of the French First Republic, the European monarchies were confronted with a challenge to their centuries-old rule that might well be contagious, spreading uncontrollably across the continent. A decade of armed conflict followed as the French republic fought successive armed coalitions, giving rise to Napoleon Bonaparte, who continued the era of warfare until his ultimate defeat in 1815.



■ A financial crisis in France contributed to the convening of the Estates-General at the Palace of Versailles in May 1789

■ This iconic painting by Jacques-Louis David depicts a resolute Napoleon Bonaparte crossing the Alps during his successful campaign in Italy





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FRANCE

Ignoring the peoples' discontent, King Louis XVI's court paid in blood during the revolution

The first Bourbon King of France, Henry IV, ascended to the throne in 1589, and 200 years later the dynasty's rule of the country came to a resounding end. King Louis XVI presided over a period of unprecedented financial instability and social unrest that combined to topple the French monarchy, which was officially abolished on 21 September 1792. The French Revolution had begun more than three years earlier in the spring of 1789. While it had flourished, the

House of Bourbon had extended its rule to include the thrones of Spain, Sicily, Naples, and the duchy of Parma.

Economic hardship contributed greatly to the downfall of the Bourbons in France. The excessive spending of the court of Louis XVI had combined with poor harvests to cause great difficulties for farmers and the poor. In addition, the French had embarked on costly wars for empire, chiefly against Great Britain. Catastrophic defeat in the Seven

"ON APRIL 20, 1792, FRANCE RESPONDED TO THE THREAT OF INVASION FROM SURROUNDING MONARCHIES BY DECLARING WAR ON AUSTRIA, PRUSSIA, AND PIEDMONT, IGNITING THE WAR OF THE FIRST COALITION"

■ Depicted in full regalia in this portrait, King Louis XVI was imprisoned and executed during the French Revolution



By the late 18th century, the clergy and nobility constituted five percent of the French population and paid virtually no taxes



■ The execution of Marie Antoinette took place in Paris on October 16, 1793, shocking the European monarchies

Years' War had stripped France of many of its colonial possessions and added to the mountain of debt already incurred.

Some Frenchmen questioned their country's support for the American Revolution, which involved spending millions of francs and sending more than 10,000 soldiers along with a large portion of the French fleet to fight the British again. Despite the fact that the war was successful, France achieved little in exchange for its investment. The fact that the British had finally been defeated was of little consolation.

The overwhelming financial burden compelled Louis XVI to convene the Estates-General in the spring of 1789, and by the summer of 1790 this general assembly had forced the king to accept a constitution that limited his power and set the stage for his complete overthrow. The following spring, Louis attempted to escape the capital of Paris and join forces under the Marquis de Bouillé that were supposedly loyal to the crown at Montmedy, near the border with the Austrian Netherlands. However, he was captured at Varennes along with his queen, Marie Antoinette, and his young son, Louis, and imprisoned. The threat to the other monarchies of Europe was readily apparent, and even before the execution of Louis XVI in January 1793 and Marie Antoinette the following October a coalition of armies was moving against the French republic, which had proclaimed itself an enemy of all ruling monarchies.

On 20 April 1792, France responded to the threat of invasion from surrounding monarchies by declaring war on Austria, Prussia, and Piedmont, igniting the War of the First Coalition. Although the combined power of the coalition forces might have overwhelmed France, the alliance failed to develop a cohesive effort. After the execution of Louis and Marie Antoinette, Britain joined the war against the French republic. Following initial reverses, the French army, its ranks swelled by a general draft of able-bodied men called the *levee en masse*, made significant gains.

While Revolutionary France had declared war initially as a defensive measure, the conflict became an opportunity for conquest. Successes on the battlefield, significantly those of a young Napoleon Bonaparte, resulted in territorial concessions and separate peace agreements that left only Great Britain, the traditional enemy of France, at war against the First Republic.



GREAT BRITAIN

At the time of the French Revolution, Great Britain was the strongest economic power in Europe

Great Britain was perhaps the most stable of European monarchies throughout the period of the French Revolution and on the eve of the Napoleonic Wars. The vast British Empire supplied wealth and stimulated commerce, while industrialisation allowed a degree of productivity that was the envy of the rest of Europe. Britain, therefore, financed much of the cost of the fight against the burgeoning French Republic and subsequently the effort to subdue Napoleon Bonaparte that culminated at Waterloo in 1815.

King George III, the third British monarch of the German House of Hanover, had come to the throne in 1760. He declared his love for Britain, spoke English as his first language, and never visited Hanover. George III opposed the excesses of the French Revolution, particularly after the execution of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. Despite the loss of much of Britain's colonial territory in North America after the American Revolution, George III remained a popular king. The French Revolution was troubling not only to the British crown, but also to the country's industrialists and prosperous landowners, who feared that the ideals of the uprising, 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,' might carry along with them a movement for the redistribution of wealth and the means of production. They also recoiled at the apparent atrocities of the Reign of Terror with its spectacles of public execution.

The political leader of Great Britain during the revolutionary period was Prime Minister William Pitt, also known as Pitt the Younger. A man of energy and talent, Pitt was a polarising figure who maintained an agenda of social reform that was put off with the emergence of unrest on the European continent. He financed the coalitions that sought to curb French exportation of revolutionary ideas and unrest and instituted an income tax to allay the significant expense involved, including a large monetary subsidy payment to Prussia in exchange for maintaining an army of at least 60,000 men in the field during the War of the First Coalition.

Great Britain's primary military strength resided with the Royal Navy, which projected British power around the globe

■ Upon the entry of Britain into the War of the First Coalition against revolutionary France, Prime Minister William Pitt addressed Parliament



While Great Britain was neutral at the outbreak of the French Revolution, the excesses of the conflict, including France's hostility to other European monarchies and its threat to invade the Netherlands, compelled the British to join the First Coalition in 1793. For the next 23 years, Britain was regularly at war with Revolutionary, and then Napoleonic France, which at times threatened an invasion of Britain itself, a nightmare scenario that might well have ended in subjugation.

The conflict between these adversaries matured into an ideological struggle, the liberalism of the revolution, a mantle taken up by Napoleon, battling the defenders of Britain's constitutional monarchy. While the British Royal Navy was repeatedly victorious at sea, the British army required time to develop into a force that was formidable enough to oppose Napoleon on land.

During the revolutionary period, Great Britain emerged as the implacable, principal foe of an increasingly imperialistic France. Standing alone at times, Britain remained throughout the struggle as the only major European power that never agreed to an alliance with France or signed an unfavourable treaty with the French government.

"FOR THE NEXT 23 YEARS, BRITAIN WAS REGULARLY AT WAR WITH REVOLUTIONARY AND THEN NAPOLEONIC FRANCE, WHICH AT TIMES THREATENED AN INVASION OF BRITAIN ITSELF"



■ King George III of Great Britain was the island nation's sovereign for nearly 60 years until his death in 1820



PRUSSIA

Prussia initially supported the ideals of Revolutionary France but later changed its political and military course

By the late 18th century, the House of Hohenzollern had been preeminent in Prussia for nearly 300 years. Frederick William II, nephew of the famed Frederick The Great, came to the throne upon the death of his uncle in 1786. The foundation of Prussian power was the strength of its army; however, unlike his predecessors Frederick William had little interest in military affairs. He delegated responsibility for the army's training and esprit de corps to others, which later cost the nation dearly.

The outbreak of the French Revolution was initially welcomed by many prominent leaders in Prussia. In fact, Count Ewald Friedrich von Hertzberg, the Prussian Foreign Minister, detested the Bourbon monarchy of France as a decadent regime run by incompetent individuals. Frederick William also supported the revolution in its early stages. In addition to their enlightened perspective, the Prussians were also pragmatic. Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, was Austrian by birth, and therefore an alliance of sorts existed between the two countries. Despite their common German ancestry, Prussia and Austria had been rivals for some time. The revolution offered the opportunity to end that troubling alliance and isolate Austria.

“COUNT EWALD FRIEDRICH VON HERTZBERG, THE PRUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, DETESTED THE BOURBON MONARCHY OF FRANCE AS A DECADENT REGIME RUN BY INCOMPETENT INDIVIDUALS”

Although their differences nearly escalated to a declaration of war on more than one occasion, Prussia and Austria reached an accord in the summer of 1790, and in its wake Frederick William abandoned efforts to pursue an alliance with revolutionary France. Instead, Prussia assumed an adversarial posture. The aging von Hertzberg was relieved of duty in favour of Johann Rudolf von Bischoffwerder, who advocated a declaration of war against France. Bischoffwerder travelled to the Austrian capital of Vienna in the summer of 1791 and negotiated the Vienna Convention, signed on 25 July, which outlined the principles of an alliance between Austria and Prussia, whose combined armies would confront Revolutionary France with a considerable threat.

A month after the Vienna Convention, Frederick William and Leopold II, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria, issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, which was neither a declaration of war nor a document that displayed any strategic initiative. Rather, the declaration was a statement of joint opposition to the revolution.

After military successes in the Seven Years' War of the mid-18th century, Prussia had nearly doubled in size by the French Revolution



Three months after revolutionary France declared war on Austria on 20 April 1792, the Duke of Brunswick led a Prussian army that invaded France, intending to march on Paris. The Prussians met the French at Valmy and were decisively defeated. The deterioration of Prussian combat efficiency was evident, and contemporary observers were stunned with outcome of the battle. It was the first major land engagement for the French army during the revolutionary wars.



RUSSIA

Before and during the French Revolution, Russia was continually at war with its neighbours

Catherine II, better known as Catherine the Great, ruled Russia from 1762 to her death in 1796. German by birth and a member of the House of Romanov by marriage, she claimed the throne of Russia following a coup d'état during which her husband, Czar Peter III, died under mysterious circumstances. During her reign, Russian prestige grew steadily. Territorial gains were accomplished through military victories against the Ottoman Empire, the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the colonization of Alaska. She annexed the Crimea in 1783.

Although she was absolute ruler of Russia, she was also an enthusiastic supporter of the Enlightenment and was inspired by the writings of Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, one of the foremost

French thinkers and authors of the period. Catherine embraced the ideals of the Enlightenment and initiated reforms in Russia that touched many aspects of society, including the law, the education of women, and the economy. In the tradition of Peter the Great, she continued to turn the empire toward the West. Remembered as an enlightened despot, Catherine the Great also was the catalyst for the Russian Enlightenment, encouraging the growth of the arts and sciences.

With the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, Russia was already embroiled in a war with Sweden, and Catherine's familiarity with the principles of the Enlightenment led her to support the revolution in the beginning. However, as the upheaval persisted she grew disenchanted with the continuing violence and class struggle. Eventually, she disavowed many

The vast Russian empire was by far the largest among the great powers of Europe, stretching to the Pacific Ocean



■ An enlightened despot, Catherine the Great of Russia rejected many principles of the Enlightenment after the French Revolution

of the tenets of the Enlightenment that she had previously embraced.

Russia did not participate in the War of the First Coalition, and Catherine died in 1796, prior to its end. She was somewhat estranged from her son, Paul I, and did not intend for him to inherit the Russian throne. Rather, she favoured her grandson, Alexander, and when

“SHE HAD ALREADY PREPARED INSTRUCTIONS THAT HER SON WAS NOT TO SUCCEED HER”

■ The Prussian Army met a bitter and unexpected defeat at the Battle of Valmy during the War of the First Coalition



After suffering further military setbacks, the Prussians made territorial concessions and signed the Peace of Basel on 5 April 1795, ending their participation in the First Coalition.

Frederick William II died in the autumn of 1797 and was succeeded by his son, Frederick William III, who did not oppose France militarily again until the War of the Fourth Coalition in 1806. The results were disastrous for Prussia, which was reduced temporarily to a French vassal state.

she died suddenly of a stroke she had already prepared instructions that her son was not to succeed her. It is said that Alexander was aware of the document that would have made him Tsar of Russia, but he dared not disclose its existence.

In 1798, Russia joined Great Britain, Austria, the Ottoman Empire, and other states in the War of the Second Coalition against revolutionary France. Russian forces under the command of General Alexander Suvorov inflicted temporary setbacks on the French in Italy, while others participated with the British in a failed invasion of the Netherlands. The French decisively defeated combined Russian, Swiss, and Austrian armies at the Second Battle of Zurich in September 1799. Russia subsequently withdrew from the Second Coalition.

The reign of Paul I lasted only five years; he was assassinated on 23 March 1801, and succeeded by Catherine's original choice, his son Alexander I, who concluded an alliance with Prussia, ended a conflict with Britain, and began a diplomatic dialogue with Emperor Francis II of the Holy Roman Empire. Alexander I initially professed admiration for Napoleon and the French nation. However, he later came to believe that the French first consul was nothing more than "the most famous tyrant the world has produced."

AUSTRIA

Staunchly conservative, the Austrian monarchy opposed the French Revolution and set out to crush it

The first Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was Charlemagne, crowned in the year 800. The last was Francis II of Austria, who abdicated after his army's crushing defeat by Napoleon's French Army at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1806. Even though the empire was dissolved, Austria remained a strident opponent of Napoleonic France.

Prior to its disastrous defeat in the War of the Third Coalition, Austria was a principal opponent of revolutionary France. The House of Habsburg, and its successor Habsburg-Lorraine, had ruled in Austria and the Holy Roman Empire since 1438, and by the time of the revolution the monarchy was firmly and conservatively entrenched. Marie Antoinette, the Archduchess of Austria and aunt of Francis II, married King Louis XVI of France in April 1770, forming a political alliance between the Habsburg and Bourbon houses. She was publicly guillotined by the revolutionaries on 16 October 1793, in the Place de la Revolution in Paris. Her execution enraged Austrian leaders, and the open contempt that the French radicals expressed for all European monarchies was a direct threat to the stability of the Austrian crown. That threat was increasingly alarming as the French armies of the First Republic gained the upper hand during the War of the First Coalition.

After settling its differences with Germanic rival Prussia, Emperor Leopold II, Francis' father and the brother of Marie Antoinette, had joined his counterpart, Prussian King Frederick William II in issuing the Declaration of Pillnitz. The declaration called upon other powers of Europe to intervene if the life of Louis XVI was threatened but also contained

the caveat that Austria would not go to war unless other European nations did so as well. On 1 March 1792, just days before revolutionary France declared war on Austria, Leopold II died, and Francis II ascended the Habsburg throne. Francis was supposedly indifferent to the fate of Marie Antoinette, having little recollection of his aunt and allowing negotiations for her release from prison to fizzle when he was unwilling to make any concessions to the French.

Francis personally led the Austrian Army for a time during the War of the First Coalition, but the French overcame early setbacks to seize the initiative and drive beyond their own borders, forcing the allied Prussians and Austrians back. Napoleon's successful campaign in Italy brought the Habsburg regime to the negotiating table, and the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed on 18 October 1797, ended the War of the First Coalition, as Britain was the only coalition partner still at war with revolutionary France.

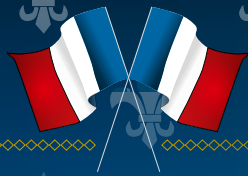
Just five months after the signing of the treaty, however, France was again at war with a coalition, this time including Austria, Britain, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Portugal, Naples, and others. The Second Coalition achieved some early victories, but in the end was no more successful than its predecessor. Napoleon and the Consulate had assumed power in France by late 1799, and Russia pulled out of the fractious alliance. France gained new territories with the signing of the Treaty of Luneville in 1801, and the Second Coalition faded away.

Austria remained periodically at war with revolutionary and Napoleonic France for the next 14 years.

Austria was a component of the Holy Roman Empire, which dated to the Middle Ages, until its dissolution in 1806

■ The city of Vienna was the capital of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire during the era of the French Revolution





EUROPE AT WAR

With Napoleonic France exercising its imperial ambitions,
Europe descended into all-out conflict

32 State of play: 1804

34 Trafalgar: Nelson's finest hour

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62 Britain's original elite
sharpshooters

72 The March to Moscow

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92 The Black Brunswickers

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52





STATE OF PLAY: 1804

STILL SMARTING FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WARS, EUROPE WAS AGAIN STANDING ON THE BRINK OF ALL OUT CONFLICT



Europe in 1804 was a battleground. The French Revolution had shaken the other major powers of the continent that fought to suppress this, as they saw it, dangerous ideology. Shifts in the model of French government also heralded major military reforms. With national zeal fuelling

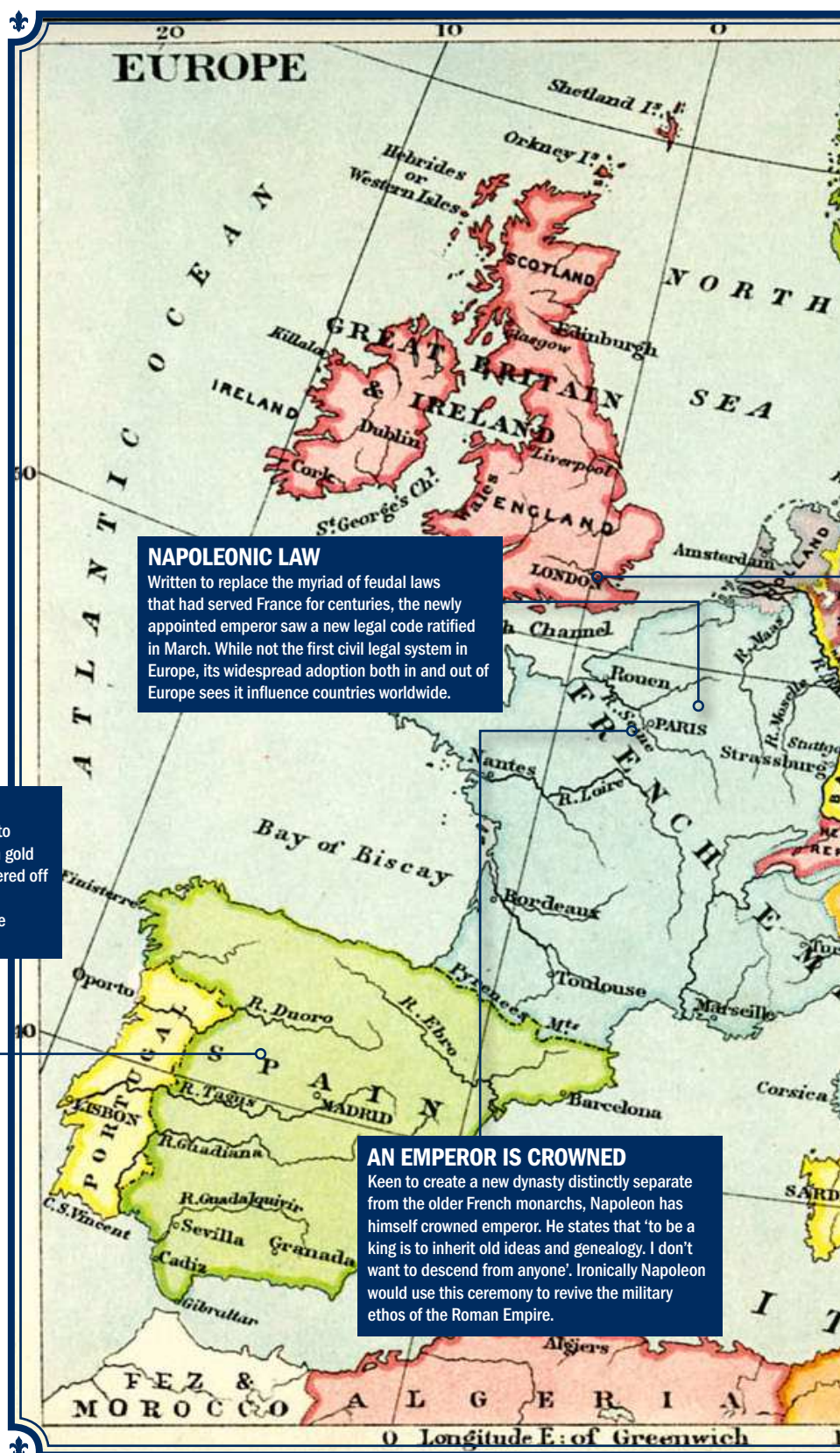
thousands of Frenchmen, regular line troops were given more trust and the ruling aristocracy were purged from the officer classes.

Britain at this time had been in a state of constant war for around 10 years. Having small land forces stationed all over its empire, its military might came not from infantry but from its navy. To offset its small presence on land, Britain paid out massive cash settlements to its allies on the continent, known at the time as the 'Golden Cavalry of St George' – which had been propping up allies like Austria since the 18th century. Although ruinously expensive, these payments paved the way for an allied victory against the French.

With France annexing more and more territory, Russia, concerned about its own territorial ambitions in Europe, was considering an alliance with the British and their allies, which was ratified the next year. Another action that shocked the established European monarchy, especially Tsar Alexander I, was the execution of Louis Antoine. This French nobleman was accused of conspiring against Napoleon, but his death was a reminder of the royal blood spilled in the French Revolution and countries like Sweden cut diplomatic ties and readied themselves for action against France.

SPAIN DECLARES WAR

A secret alliance between Spain and France had come to British attention and a trap was laid to capture Spanish gold payments to France. In October a British squadron lingered off the coast of Cadiz to intercept Spanish galleons with a value of around £70 million today. After this slight, the Spanish declared war in December.



NAPOLEONIC LAW

Written to replace the myriad of feudal laws that had served France for centuries, the newly appointed emperor saw a new legal code ratified in March. While not the first civil legal system in Europe, its widespread adoption both in and out of Europe sees it influence countries worldwide.

AN EMPEROR IS CROWNED

Keen to create a new dynasty distinctly separate from the older French monarchs, Napoleon has himself crowned emperor. He states that 'to be a king is to inherit old ideas and genealogy. I don't want to descend from anyone'. Ironically Napoleon would use this ceremony to revive the military ethos of the Roman Empire.

PITT THE YOUNGER

The British Prime minister, William Pitt the Younger, whips up a flurry of diplomatic relations that allows Britain to enter the Third Coalition alongside Austria, Russia and Sweden against France. This would be a revival of Pitts fascinating and progressive political career, having resigned a few years earlier in protest to Irish reform.

**RUSSO-PERSIAN WAR**

The fourth war in a series of conflicts spanning hundreds of years saw the powers of Russia and Persia clash over a territorial dispute. Alexander I, still new to the throne, was eager to retain control of what is modern day Georgia and entered into a prolonged conflict that came to a close in 1814.



■ Trafalgar was the culmination of an astonishing naval career for Nelson. But it would also be his final engagement



TRAFALGAR: NELSON'S FINEST HOUR

FOR BRITAIN, TRAFALGAR WAS THE LAST HOPE AGAINST A FRENCH INVASION, BUT FOR NELSON, IT WAS THE FINAL BATTLE AGAINST A FAR MORE FEARSOME FOE



ust before noon on 21 October 1805, Admiral Viscount Horatio Nelson stood aboard the deck of his flagship HMS Victory. A light westerly wind whistled through the air, and in the distance he could see the frigates of the

Franco-Spanish fleet. For weeks he had bided his time, patiently waiting, reviewing tactics and planning every action down to the finest detail. Now, finally the hour had come, and he signalled for his fleet to begin the attack. In less than five hours, he would experience a victory that would define his life, and a loss that would end it.

Today Nelson is remembered as one of Britain's greatest heroes – a warrior, a commander and a victor. However, when he entered this world on 29 September 1758, the sixth of 11 children, he was a sickly baby. His parents were so fearful that he would not survive that they had him baptised early. This occurrence would begin a lifelong tradition of battling and succeeding against the odds.

The Nelson family were not unknown, but they certainly weren't particularly wealthy and they had to exploit their connections to ensure a steady future for their children. Nelson's mother, Catherine Suckling, was a distant relative of Robert Walpole, first prime minister of Great Britain. However, tragically, Nelson's mother died when the boy was just nine. It was to be his maternal uncle who would have the biggest influence on his life, as aged just 12, Nelson began his naval career serving under his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, on the HMS *Raisonnable*.

When Nelson joined the navy, it was in the lowest ranks. However, perhaps the result of being a sixth child in a large family, he sought glory above all else. This quest to make a name for himself and achieve renown fuelled a work ethic that soon impressed his superiors and saw him ascend through the ranks at a rapid rate. This was particularly impressive for a boy who suffered from extreme sea-sickness.

After crossing the Atlantic several times, Nelson, eager to experience as much as possible, obtained a position on HMS *Carcass*. The ship was set on an expedition across the Arctic to find the fabled northwest passage to India. This was a very perilous mission, and was ultimately unsuccessful, with the ship forced to turn back. However, along the way, an eager 15-year-old Nelson decided to pursue a polar bear across the ice. Young, intrepid and fearless, thanks to a sudden crack in the ice separating the beast from Nelson, the headstrong boy was granted another last minute escape from likely death.

The eager young sailor saw his first action when he was stationed aboard *Seahorse* in the East Indies. It was only a brief exchange of volleys, but Nelson was gaining experience and watching carefully. He was a fast learner and had a quick mind for naval tactics, so when a case of malaria caused him to be discharged,

it affected him badly. While recovering, Nelson faced another battle, but this time with depression. For someone so determined to prove their worth and make a name for themselves, coming so close to a death of relative obscurity was a difficult pill to swallow. However, his proud, optimistic spirit won through, and fuelled by patriotism and renewed determination, Nelson passed the lieutenant exam and set sail again, this time forging straight into the perilous heart of the War of American Independence.

Aged just 20, Nelson was given command of a frigate and experienced his first taste of command, attacking Spanish settlements in Nicaragua. The operation was a success, and Nelson was commended for his quick thinking and valiant actions. However, this success did not last, as almost the entire British force was struck down with yellow fever. Nelson himself barely recovered from the illness, and when he returned to sea in 1784, it was not to a life of daring battles and valiant successes. Instead Nelson's role was to enforce the Navigation Act. He made many enemies, and the loneliness of command saw him sink back into a state of despair and depression. When he returned home, he found himself unpopular with his kinsmen, without any appointment, and unemployed for five long years.

“THE QUEST TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF AND ACHIEVE RENOWN FUELLED A WORK ETHIC THAT SOON IMPRESSED HIS SUPERIORS, AND SAW HIM ASCEND THROUGH THE RANKS”



■ This 19th-century painting shows a dying Nelson in the arms of Captain Hardy as the battle wages around him

LIFE IN NELSON'S NAVY

SERVING UNDER NELSON, MANY 19TH-CENTURY SAILORS FACED GRAVER DANGERS THAN THE ENEMY



WORK & WARFARE

Sailors usually started their careers as boys, but during wartime the navy needed an additional 60,000 men for the fleet, and this could include those who had never gone to sea. The skilled work was carried out by about 20 per cent of the crew, while the rest dealt with heavy hauling.



FOOD & DRINK

Food on board was of varying quality, and the meat was salted and placed in barrels for preservation. Although much of the food was bland and dry, sailors received regular meals. They were entitled to a gallon of beer each day and drunkenness on board was a big problem in the navy.



DISCIPLINE & PUNISHMENT

Discipline on board ships was harsh, but it was equally harsh on land. The rules on a ship, known as the Articles of War, declared that men could be hung for mutiny, treason, desertion or sodomy. Lesser forms of punishment were starting, running the gauntlet and flogging.



HEALTH & HYGIENE

With men living in such cramped, damp conditions, disease was rampant, with 50 per cent of all Royal Navy deaths in 1810 attributed to it. Surgery was far from advanced, with amputations used for any injured limbs, and there are accounts of tubs filled with severed body parts during battles.



PAY & BENEFITS

Poverty forced many men to sea, and on top of their annual salary, the riches gained from capture of an enemy vessel were divided among the men based on rank. Captains enjoyed three-eighths of the reward, however, Nelson often complained about his lack of prize money as he was posted away from bountiful areas.

Nelson was battered and bruised, but he was not defeated. His marriage to the widow Frances Nisbet, who had a five-year-old son, revitalised a man who was already far older than his 29 years. Meanwhile, overseas, events were happening that would affect the path his life would take forever. The people of France were rebelling, the king had been killed, the world was watching and finally, Nelson was given a ship: the 64-gun *Agamemnon*.

At last things in Nelson's life were looking up – he had a loving wife at home, a fast powerful ship under his command, and an able crew who listened and followed his orders. This dynamic life suited Nelson, and in it he began to flourish. The enthusiastic young man was still there, but another side was emerging, a capable commander and flashes of genius. It was during this period, while defending the port of Toulon, that Nelson first crossed swords with a 24-year-old French Artillery officer by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte.

It was during this period of revolution, unrest and war that Nelson achieved some of his lesser known but equally notable victories against the Spanish at Cape Vincent in 1797 and at the Battle of Copenhagen. The bold, intrepid commander was beginning to carve a name for himself. His men adored him because not only was he extremely capable, but he was also daring – a trait that cost him the sight in his right eye. In the British Navy he was something of a rebel, ignoring orders to withdraw. In one instance during the battle of Copenhagen, he lifted his telescope to his blind eye, pretending not to see the command to withdraw. Nelson's force of will and bullish British spirit won him victory after victory, and

although he was admired greatly as a leader, a remnant of the young man seeking affirmation and glory remained. Depression and self doubt were demons that Nelson was doomed to fight until his final day, foes that even a million naval victories and commendations could not ultimately vanquish.

Although a peace treaty had been signed with France in 1802, just a year later war broke out once again. Nelson was appointed commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet and hoisted his flag on the ship that would be forever linked with his name, HMS *Victory*. His mission was to blockade Toulon to prevent French ships there meeting up with those in the Atlantic and also Spanish ships in Cadiz and Cartagena. Britain was well aware that the prize Napoleon desired most of all was invasion of their own country, and its ultimate destruction. With the combined force of these ships, that invasion was a very real possibility. If united, this single invincible fleet could take control of the Channel, enabling the French emperor to ravage Britain and leave it in tatters. It was up to Nelson and his men to stop that happening.

The French Admiral Pierre Villeneuve was a man under pressure. It was under his command that the combined fleet was to sail, and it was up to him to ensure that happened. Although Nelson and his fleet lurked nearby, Villeneuve managed to sneak out of Toulon under cover of bad weather. Upon realising the admiral had moved, Nelson set off in pursuit. The French reunited with some of their ships, but they failed to take control of the Channel so fled south to Cadiz with their fleet.

Napoleon was not pleased with Villeneuve's delay and already had plans to replace him. It

“HIS MEN ADORED HIM BECAUSE NOT ONLY WAS HE EXTREMELY CAPABLE, BUT HE WAS ALSO DARING – A TRAIT THAT COST HIM THE SIGHT IN HIS RIGHT EYE”

NELSON'S ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

NELSON'S TENDENCY TO PUT HIMSELF IN THE HEART OF BATTLE LED TO HIM SUFFERING AN ABUNDANCE OF AILMENTS THROUGHOUT HIS SEAFARING CAREER



Nelson's easily recognisable medals made him a high-value target for French sharpshooters at Trafalgar

was a final accusation of cowardice that forced Villeneuve to leave the harbour, and as far as he knew, there was no British force nearby that could hope to best him. Unfortunately for Villeneuve, he was wrong.

When Villeneuve first made for Cadiz, Nelson had returned home, and for 25 days he had perfected his strategy. Napoleon had refocused his efforts on his Grande Armée in Austria, but in England, invasion by sea still seemed a very real possibility, and Nelson was the hero who could prevent it. On 15 September 1805, Nelson set sail on Victory again, and was very careful to keep his main fleet well out to sea. Villeneuve had no idea that what he was running into was a strategy designed to stop him for good, and a man who still had something to prove.

As the silhouettes of the combined fleet appeared against the sunrise over Cape Trafalgar, the British finally began to move. They split into two divisions, one led by Nelson and the other by Collingwood. On board Victory, Nelson ordered his lieutenant to carry a message to the fleet: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Nelson was many things – curious, energetic, even reckless. His adventurous spirit and quest for personal pride had led him to travel to the furthest reaches of the world, but it had been his duty that kept him there. It was this sense of duty in the face of fear and danger that Nelson instilled in his men that day.

The men had every right to be afraid. Naval tactics at the time meant that almost every battle followed a set sequence – the ships would line up against each other and attack from the broadside cannons. This strategy was such an integral part of naval warfare at the time that it had inspired the name 'ship of the line' for the vessels that took part in it. But Nelson had other plans. He would deviate

1771 When Nelson's naval career began, so did his ongoing battle with a sailor's worst nightmare – chronic seasickness. Nelson suffered with the ailment for the rest of his life.

1780 In San Juan, Nelson suffered from a cornucopia of ailments – dysentery, yellow fever, chest pain and even poisoning from a toxic fruit.

1782 Like many sailors at the time, Nelson and his crew suffered from scurvy, and this would become a repetitive sickness that the admiral would later work to eliminate on his ships.

1794 In Bastia, Nelson was almost killed by a huge amount of dirt from a heavy shot falling on him. Days later, he was hit by earth and rocks from an explosion and was blinded in his right eye.

1798 Nelson was hit with a fragment of shot during battle. Again he declared himself dead, but continued on commanding the battle while bleeding profusely. Nelson suffered with blinding headaches for the remainder of his life.

1801 Again Nelson proclaimed his death was close when he suffered from severe heatstroke and vomiting, but he recovered remarkably quickly.

1776 Nelson suffered his first bout of what would be a reoccurring sickness – malaria. This first attack almost took his life, but also gave him a vision of a voice telling him that he would become a hero.

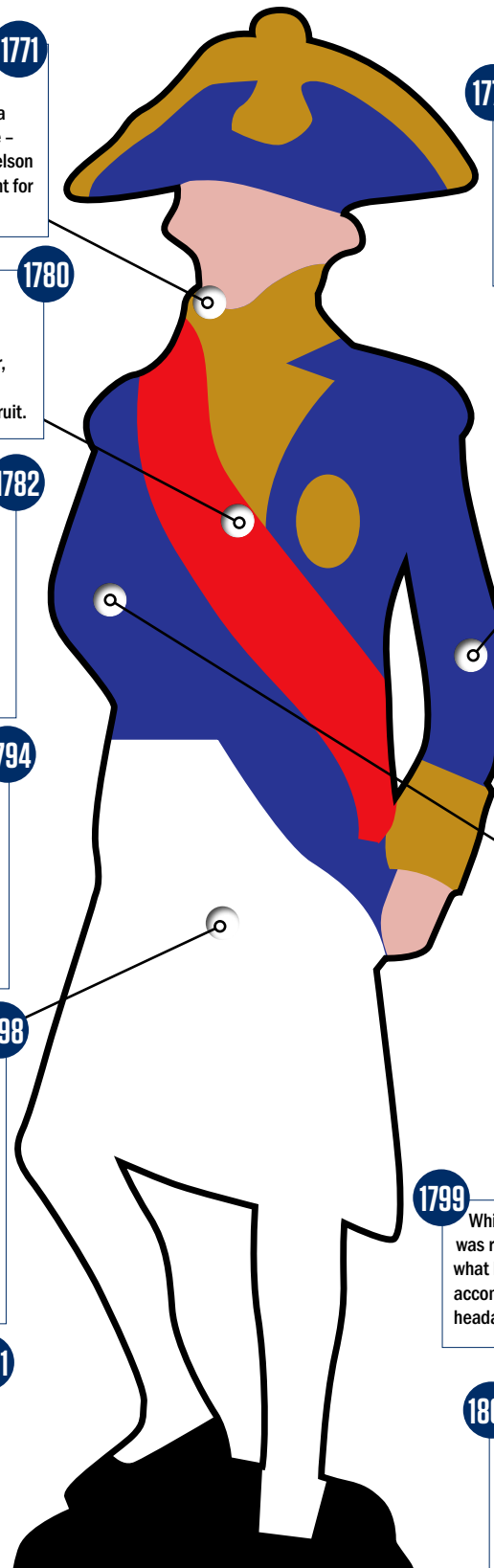
1781 While in London, Nelson complained that his left arm and leg were causing him distress. The fingers on his left hand were also white, numb and swollen.

1787 Upon returning from the West Indies, Nelson was struck down with a fever so severe that a keg of rum was prepared to preserve his body if he were to pass away.

1797 In the midst of battle, Nelson received a musket ball shot above his right elbow. It was declared that he was killed, but the ship's surgeon amputated his forearm. Half an hour later, he returned to battle.

1799 While in Palermo, Sicily, Nelson was reported to be suffering from what he believed to be heart attacks, accompanied by depression, headaches, sickness and indigestion.

1805 During the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson was struck in the shoulder and spine. Once more he stated: "I have but a short time to live." This time he was correct.





■ Today HMS Victory is on display at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

from the norm, and instead of facing down the line of Villeneuve's fleet in the ordinary fashion, he would attack them from the west, at right angles, in two squadrons. This put Nelson and his men at immense risk, as they were exposed to the fleet's powerful and devastating broadside cannons, but if they could cut their way through, they could slice the fleet in three and destroy it.

The British aligned themselves into two long lines, and like two arrows fired forward. They stormed towards the combined fleet, led by the flagships. The Franco-Spanish fleet were not expecting or prepared for such a tactic. The French ship *Fougueux* let off a broadside towards Collingwood's *Royal Sovereign* as he burst through the line, but it was too late. *Sovereign* raked *Santa Ana*, the Spanish flagship, with an attack so devastating it disabled 14 guns and 400 crew members. *Victory* meanwhile was leading the charge towards the two ships *Redoubtable* and *Bucentaure*. With the fleet so crowded together, *Victory* was forced to ram the ship and fire off broadsides at point-blank range.

The situation was so dangerous that many had urged Nelson to conduct the battle from a safe distance, or at least remove the stars of honour gleaming on his coat. Nelson refused. He had come close to death many times before, but he was convinced that he would meet his end at Trafalgar. He had already said farewell to his friends and family, and if he was

going to die, he was going to go out with his medals on his chest.

French sailors in the rigging of *Redoubtable* were already picking off men exposed on *Victory's* deck. Minutes before Nelson himself was shot, a man standing beside him was blown in half by a cannon ball, but Nelson did not move. Whether it was for pride, bravado or courage, Nelson remained on the deck of his ship. Shortly after 1pm, a musket shot hit Nelson, throwing him to the deck floor and shattering his spine. Still calling out instructions to his crew, he was carried below and examined by a surgeon, who confirmed death was imminent.

Despite his injuries and suffering immense pain, Nelson constantly asked for updates on the battle. Before he died, he was informed that the British fleet had taken 15 enemy ships. Nelson's dangerous tactic had worked; he knew he had won. As he drew his last breath, his beloved flag captain Hardy kissed his forehead and Nelson uttered his final words: "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty." Nelson had never desired a long, comfortable life, he was a master of the seas and a seeker of adventure. As he left this world with the news of his greatest victory ringing in his ears, he departed it, finally, with pride.

Nelson's fatal injury caused him to miss the climax of the battle, where three British ships battered the French flagship *Bucentaure* into submission, and Villeneuve was forced

to surrender. All around British ships were tearing holes into the combined fleet, at great loss of life. The French ship *Achille* refused to surrender, and was blown up with everyone on board. By the end of the battle, the British had suffered 1,666 casualties, while the combined fleet's casualties numbered near 14,000. France and Spain lost approximately 21 ships in the battle, while Britain lost none. Napoleon's plans to invade were well and truly thwarted.



THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

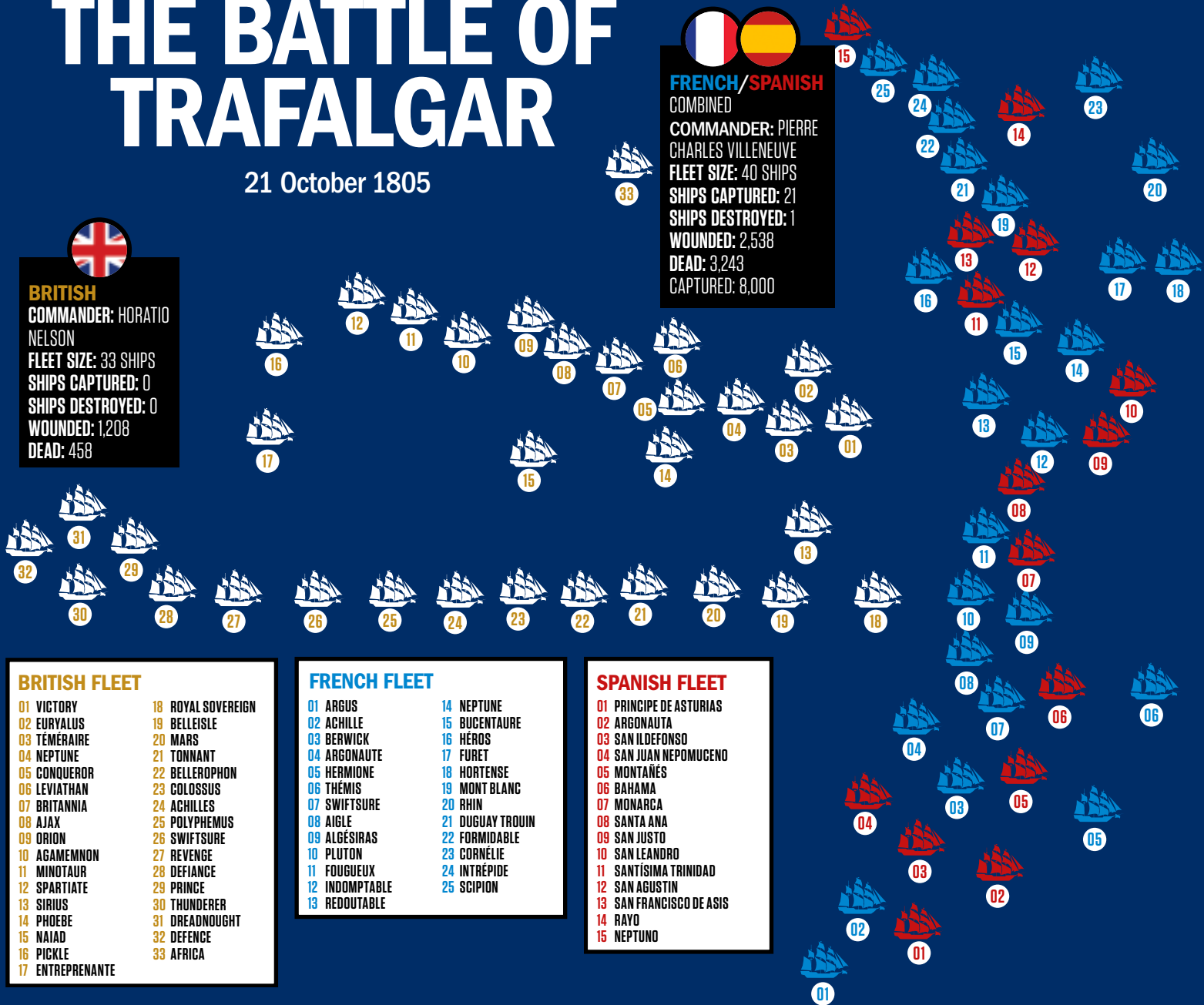
21 October 1805



BRITISH
COMMANDER: HORATIO NELSON
FLEET SIZE: 33 SHIPS
SHIPS CAPTURED: 0
SHIPS DESTROYED: 0
WOUNDED: 1,208
DEAD: 458



FRENCH/SPANISH
COMBINED
COMMANDER: PIERRE CHARLES VILLENEUVE
FLEET SIZE: 40 SHIPS
SHIPS CAPTURED: 21
SHIPS DESTROYED: 1
WOUNDED: 2,538
DEAD: 3,243
CAPTURED: 8,000



BRITISH FLEET

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 01 VICTORY | 18 ROYAL SOVEREIGN |
| 02 EURYALUS | 19 BELLEISLE |
| 03 TEMÉRAIRE | 20 MARS |
| 04 NEPTUNE | 21 TONNANT |
| 05 CONQUEROR | 22 BELLEROPHON |
| 06 LEVIATHAN | 23 COLOSSUS |
| 07 BRITANNIA | 24 ACHILLES |
| 08 AJAX | 25 POLYPHEMUS |
| 09 ORION | 26 SWIFTSURE |
| 10 AGAMEMNON | 27 REVENGE |
| 11 MINOTAUR | 28 DEFIANCE |
| 12 SPARTIATE | 29 PRINCE |
| 13 SIRIUS | 30 THUNDERER |
| 14 PHOEBE | 31 DREADNOUGHT |
| 15 NAIAD | 32 DEFENCE |
| 16 PICKLE | 33 AFRICA |
| 17 ENTREPRENANTE | |

FRENCH FLEET

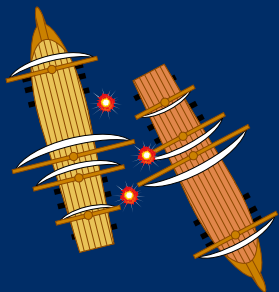
- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 01 ARGUS | 14 NEPTUNE |
| 02 ACHILLE | 15 BUCENTAURE |
| 03 BERWICK | 16 HEROS |
| 04 ARGONAUTE | 17 FURET |
| 05 HERMIONE | 18 HORTENSE |
| 06 THÉMIS | 19 MONT BLANC |
| 07 SWIFTSURE | 20 RHIN |
| 08 AIGLE | 21 DUGUAY TROUIN |
| 09 ALGÉSIRAS | 22 FORMIDABLE |
| 10 PLUTON | 23 CORNÉLIE |
| 11 FOUGUEUX | 24 INTÉPIDÉ |
| 12 INDOMPTABLE | 25 SCIPION |
| 13 REDOUTABLE | |

SPANISH FLEET

- | |
|--------------------------|
| 01 PRINCIPE DE ASTURIAS |
| 02 ARGONAUTA |
| 03 SAN ILDEFONSO |
| 04 SAN JUAN NEPOMUCENO |
| 05 MONTAÑÉS |
| 06 BAHAMA |
| 07 MONARCA |
| 08 SANTA ANA |
| 09 SAN JUSTO |
| 10 SAN LEANDRO |
| 11 SANTÍSIMA TRINIDAD |
| 12 SAN AGUSTIN |
| 13 SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS |
| 14 RAYO |
| 15 NEPTUNO |

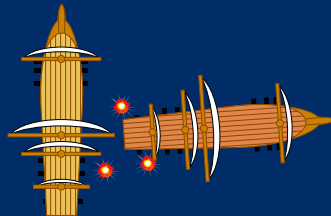
NELSON'S TACTICS

BATTLE AT SEA USUALLY FOLLOWED DEFINED TACTICS, BUT NELSON DEVIATED, RISKED EVERYTHING AND CLAIMED THE MOST DECISIVE VICTORY OF THE WAR



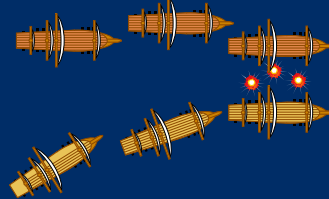
BROADSIDE

Because it was near impossible for ships to fire over the bow or stern, all the guns were positioned along the side of the ship. Because of this, it was the captain's aim to face the side of their ships against the enemy's side and then unleash the cannons in an attack. This was known as a broadside.



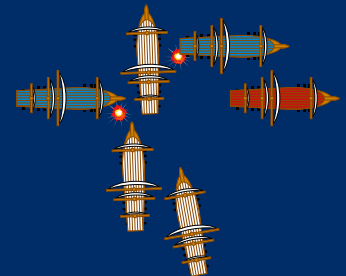
RAKING

A broadside attack was powerful, but it exposed the ship to the enemy ship's fire. It was safer for the vessel to bring its broadside to the bow or stern of the enemy vessel. This meant the ship was able to fire through the entire length of the ship, while the enemy was unable to return fire. This was called 'raking'.



TRADITIONAL FORMATION

Because the main aim of battles was to bring your ships broadside against the enemy's to unleash devastating firepower, ships would be aligned to unleash a torrent of attacks against each other. Often this resulted in two lines of ships sailing parallel and exchanging broadside over and over again.



THE NELSON TOUCH

During the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson made the risky decision to abandon the traditional tactic and instead he attacked the fleet at right angles. His ships underwent a torrent of attacks as they approached, but when they broke through the line, they raked the enemy ships and knocked them out one by one.



NELSON'S LEGACY

We speak to Roger Knight, who in 2000 changed his career from deputy director of the National Maritime Museum to that of teacher and author. His biggest book is the award-winning *The Pursuit Of Victory: The Life And Achievement Of Horatio Nelson* (2005). This biography was translated into French in 2015, the first time that this has happened since the 19th century. In September 2016, he is publishing a study guide on Nelson in the Connell Guides series.

How influential is Nelson's legacy today?

The legacy of Nelson has had a chequered history, for the straitlaced mid-Victorians did not approve of his relationship with Emma Hamilton and he was quietly dropped as a national hero. However, when the German naval threat emerged at the end of the 19th century, his heroic attributes were resurrected by those who wanted more warships to be built, and he came back into fashion.

The memory of his clear-cut victories led the British public to expect the Royal Navy to overwhelm the Germans in World War I – after the battle of Jutland in 1916, they were to be disappointed. However, the memory of his character and victories re-emerged as morale-raising propaganda during World War II. In the 21st century, the Royal Navy no longer has a worldwide role or an empire to defend and is a fraction of its mid-20th-century size. Yet Nelson's influence remains, and he is still in the first rank of national heroes. Navies around the world still study his leadership and management methods, when, most unusually for the time, he trusted and delegated responsibility downwards. One change that has taken place is that historians know much more about the officers, seamen and ships of the Georgian sailing navy, and studies of Nelson take the role of many other people and historical factors into account when writing about his victories.

Perhaps the most difficult strand of Nelson's legacy to analyse is the way in which he is still seen as the person who led the national resistance against the might of Napoleonic France. How much does his memory affect our complex relations with the continent of Europe?

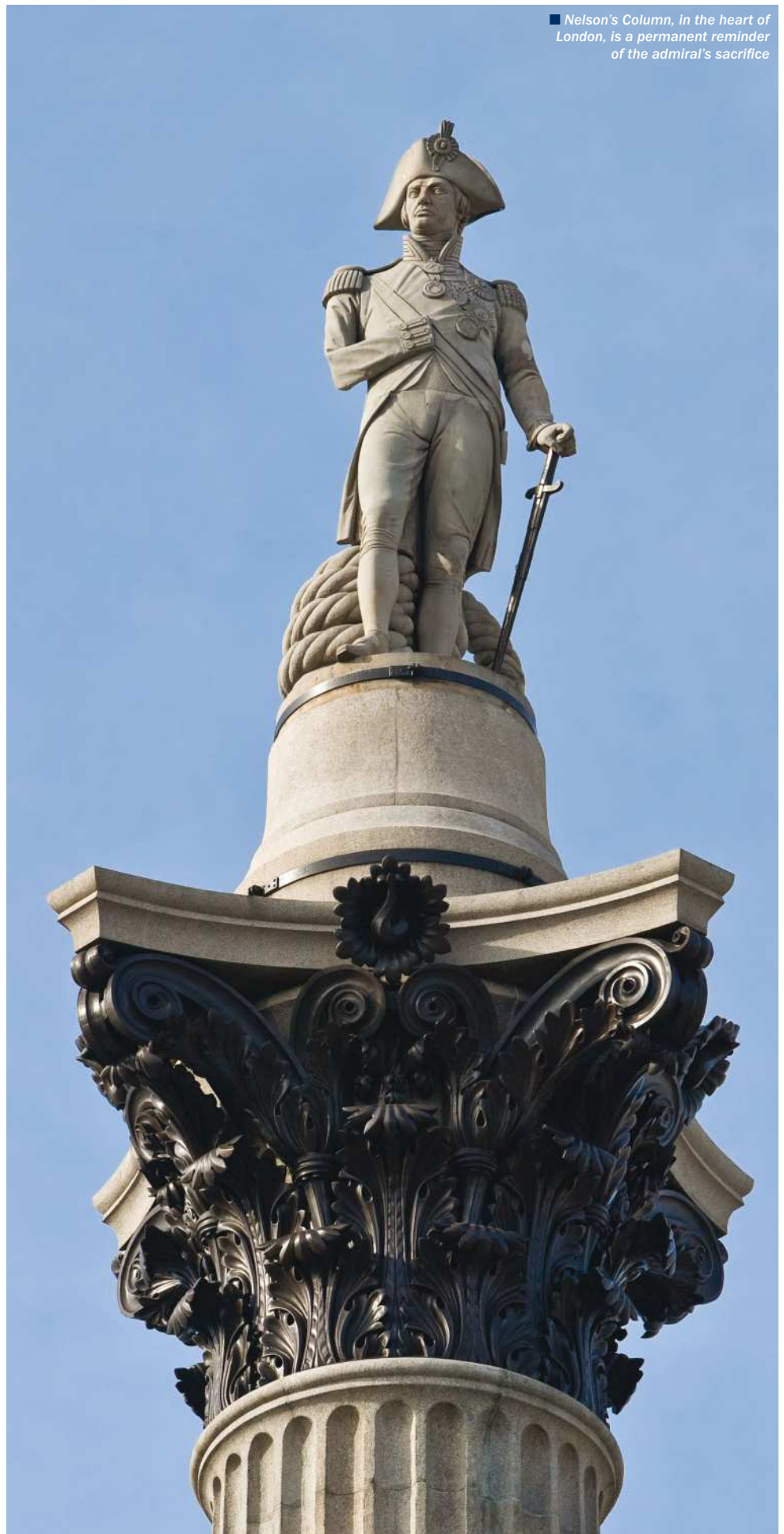


Captured Spanish and French flags were hung in St Paul's Cathedral for Nelson's state funeral



The victory at Trafalgar had cemented British dominance of the sea, a mastery that would go unchallenged for ten more years of war, and more than 100 years of worldwide naval domination. However, this victory was overshadowed in England by the news of Nelson's death. He had been the nation's hero before he departed, and when his body was returned, he was their martyr. Nelson's body was preserved for the journey back in a cask of rum, as the admiral had requested a land burial. He was honoured with a magnificent state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral, and his popularity soared. His image was carved into countless statues and monuments, streets were named after him, and his flagship was painstakingly preserved, surviving today as the oldest naval ship still in commission.

Nelson's rise from a small, sickly child to the greatest and most beloved war hero in British history is unlikely to be repeated. He remains a key part of British identity, and his famous column resides at the heart of the capital. The man himself has taken on an almost god-like status, a source of pride, duty and bravery. But he was also a man who was led by a desire to prove himself, who suffered with self doubt. Perhaps this is Nelson and Britain's greatest achievement, not a naval victory, but the willpower and bravery to sail against the winds of uncertainty and fear, and to overcome.



■ Nelson's Column, in the heart of London, is a permanent reminder of the admiral's sacrifice

HMS VICTORY

FAMOUS FOR ITS PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR, TODAY HMS VICTORY SERVES AS A LIVING, BREATHING MUSEUM OF THE GEORGIAN NAVY

Although Victory is famous for its part in Trafalgar, Victory as a ship had experienced many battles before Nelson commanded it, and many more afterwards. Laid down in 1759 and launched in 1765, Victory was commissioned as a new first-rate ship. The vessel was unusually large during a period when smaller, faster ships were used by the British navy, but with 100, and eventually 104, guns on board, it was a force to be reckoned with. Victory took part in the battles of Ushant, the Siege of Gibraltar and the Battle of Cape St Vincent before it was reconstructed for Nelson and Trafalgar. The vessel was fated to outlive its famous master, and sailed on numerous expeditions into the Baltic before being finally moored in Portsmouth in late 1812.

POLE MASTS

Victory's masts were made from several large strips of wood bound together securely with iron hoops.

SIZE

Victory measured 69.34 meters overall, and could move at a maximum speed of eight to nine knots (15 to 17 km/h). It also required 821 crew members to sail it sufficiently.

FIGUREHEAD

Originally Victory carried a heavy, ornate, decorative figurehead, but this began to rot and was replaced with a far lighter, simpler and practical design.

GUNS

Victory originally boasted 100 guns, but restorations before Trafalgar took the ship to 104 guns over four decks. The cannonballs fired at Trafalgar weighed up to 15kg.

CHAINWALES

Chainwales were the fixings at the side of the vessel for standing rigging sat on the upper deck gun ports. This prevented the rigging from interfering with the guns when fired.

TOPS

Reducing weight and increasing speed was a big priority when reconstructing Victory, so the tops, originally made from heavy oak, were replaced with ones made from fir in two halves.

PAINTWORK

Between 1800 and 1803, Victory underwent significant repairs, and it was then that it was painted with the iconic black and yellow streaks. This would later be adopted by all Royal Navy warships.

GUN DECK

Victory carried 32-pound guns on the lower gun deck. Not only did they use less gunpowder than the previous 42-pound ones, but they were also lighter, and quicker and easier to load.

AUSTERLITZ

NAPOLEON'S GRIP ON EUROPE WAS GETTING STRONGER, BUT A 85,000-STRONG COALITION HAD AMASSED TO END THE AGGRESSION ONCE AND FOR ALL



AUSTERLITZ, MORAVIA 2 DECEMBER 1805

WHO

The Grande Armée came up against the Russians and Austrians in what was the Third Coalition against Napoleon.

WHAT

The victor of this decisive battle would become the dominant force in Central Europe and the greatest of the three emperors.

WHERE

Austerlitz was a small town in the region of Moravia just over 100km from the centre of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna.

WHY

With an invasion of Britain no longer an option, Napoleon had turned his attention eastwards to Austria and Russia.

OUTCOME

Napoleon records a stunning victory that causes the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire and the end of the Third Coalition.



■ Austerlitz was a significant battle that marked the end of the Third Coalition and the demise of the Holy Roman Empire



Freevectormaps.com - Corbis



ver since the turn of the 19th Century, Western Europe had been a battleground. The Empires of old had been struggling against a reinvigorated First French Republic, and by 1803 a Third Coalition had been created to oppose Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Originally, the French had wanted to invade Britain, but their loss to the Royal Navy at Trafalgar and the subsequent Treaty of Amiens meant Napoleon began to cast his eyes eastwards. Having already secured Spain as an ally, the two powers that stood in the way were the Habsburg Monarchy and what remained of an ailing Holy Roman Empire, plus the mighty Russian Empire. Led by Francis II and Tsar Alexander respectively, the war would now be fought between three emperors.

Napoleon was a shrewd tactician, with the loyal and resolute Grande Armée at his disposal. His strategic nous was evident as soon as the war began in September 1805, as French troops scored victories against the Austrian army at Ulm and Munich. There was seemingly no stopping the Grande Armée, which had crossed the Rhine and emphatically swept across the continent. This was followed by the quick capture of Vienna in November of that year. Vienna was the capital and centre of the Habsburg Empire, and its swift occupation shocked the major powers. There had to be a response, and it came near the town of Austerlitz in the kingdom of Moravia. Would Napoleon be too strong, or would the old armies of the European kingdoms prove too strong?

THE BATTLE PLAN

The battle took place atop the Pratzen Heights. It was foggy on the morning of 1 December, as vast regiments from three armies amassed and awaited orders from above. The Russians stood in the winter cold, confident that the excellent artillery within its ranks would dismantle the French regiments. The Austrian cavalry, armed with their cold steel, were considered among the best mounted troops in the world. In total, the allied coalition numbered 85,000 Russians and Austrians.

The generals were confident of stopping the French advance, and had outlined a plan devised by Austrian Chief of Staff General Weyrother. The strategy was designed to target the French right flank in an attempt to force

■ *Napoleon's artillery divisions favoured light cannons and howitzers that were part of the Gribeauval or Year XI artillery system*



■ *The French forces were impeccably organised and committed to their emperor and the glory of the First French Republic*

them southwards and open up a path to retake Vienna. Russian General von Buxhoeveden, who would be joined on the opposite side by General Bagration, would lead this advance. The centre would be held in reserve to keep the flanks steady. In charge of all the allied operations was Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, but he was soon brushed aside in favour of the direct leadership of Tsar Alexander I, who was hungry for an all-out assault to finally crush the Grande Armée.

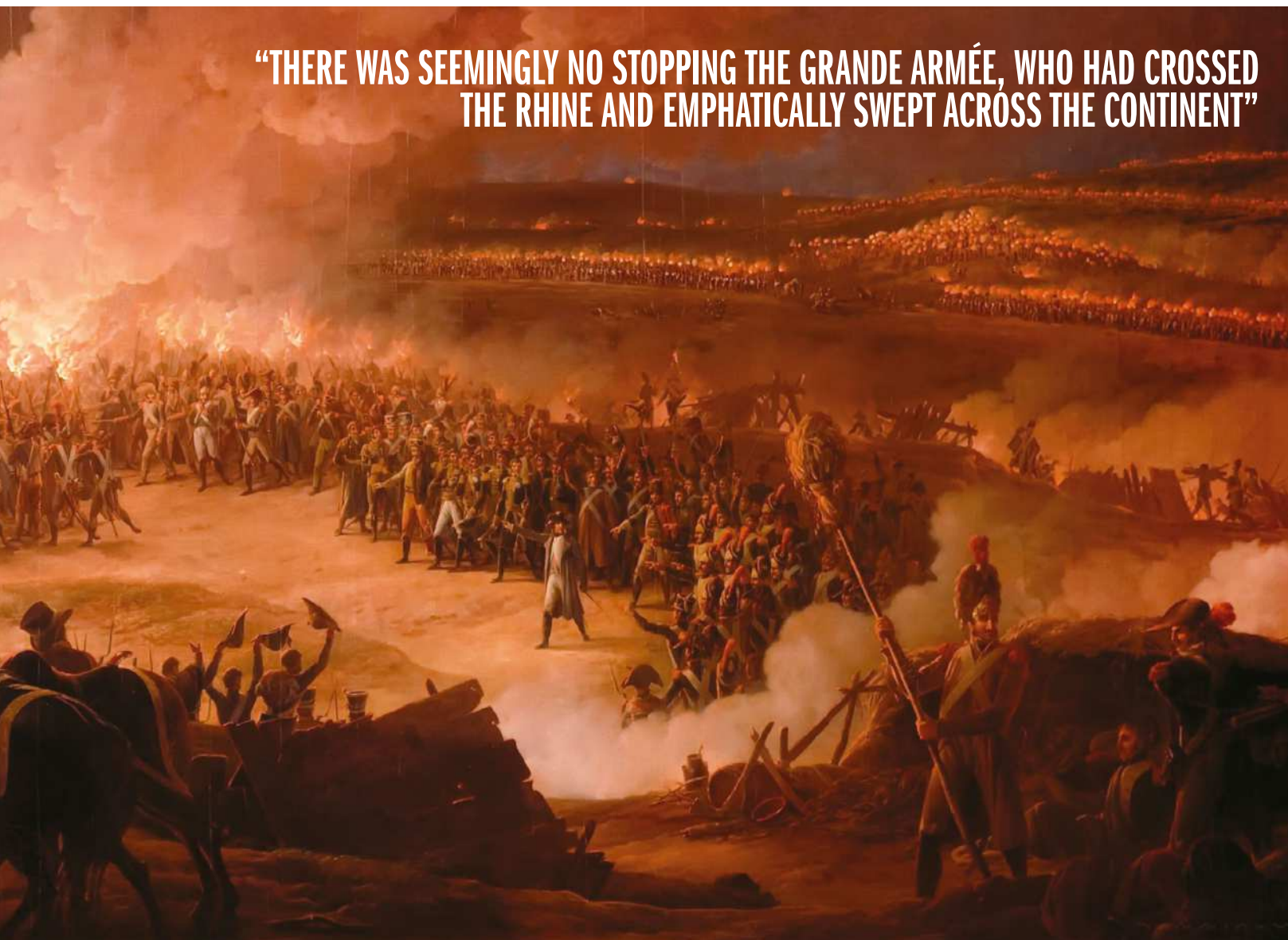
The Austrians and Kutuzov were willing to wait and force Napoleon's hand, but

Alexander was far too reckless to even consider this approach. The Emperor would rather listen to his own desires than the Commander-in-Chief and besides, the Austrians were not to be trusted after their capitulation in battle at Ulm a few months prior.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had a strategy of his own. After having failed to prevent the two Russian armies linking up, Austerlitz now became the location of the French Army's stand. The right side of his forces, which the coalition saw as a potential fragile point, was falsely weakened by the Emperor to draw the allied troops in. If General Legrand's IV Corps could hold the Russians and Austrians here, the soft underbelly in the centre of the coalition was there for the taking. Napoleon, a self-made general, even rode with his troops into the heat of battle – a very different approach to the old-style Austrian and Russian emperors. The French numbered 73,000, as they lacked the VIII Corps that remained posted in Vienna, the II Corps who were watching the Alps and the VI Corps stationed in Carinthia. Shrewdly, Napoleon sent his aide, Anne Jean Marie René Savary, to negotiate an armistice and deceive

“NAPOLEON EVEN RODE WITH HIS TROOPS INTO THE HEAT OF BATTLE, A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH OLD-STYLE AUSTRIAN AND RUSSIAN EMPERORS”

“THERE WAS SEEMINGLY NO STOPPING THE GRANDE ARMÉE, WHO HAD CROSSED THE RHINE AND EMPHATICALLY SWEEPED ACROSS THE CONTINENT”



the Allies into thinking that the French lacked confidence. While this was happening, his soldiers organised and equipped themselves. Napoleon based his army on organisation and professionalism, and his popularity was at an all-time high with the French troops, who were at the peak of their morale, this battle being on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation. This boosted the Grande Armée, which was on the point of exhaustion after a long campaign through central Europe. The Third Coalition was aware of the French fatigue, but had problems of its own. The allied force was 70 per cent Russian and 30 per cent Austrian, so many of the orders given out had to be translated back and forth between two languages, which made it difficult to undertake a complex strategy. However, they were pinning their hopes on reinforcements from both Archduke Ferdinand Karl Joseph to the north-west and Archdukes Charles and John from Italy to the south. This was enhanced further by 4,000 Austrians and 12,000 Russians already on their way to the battlefield, and would arrive in the next few days. If the battle could be delayed just a bit, then the coalition's numbers would increase

dramatically. However, this way of thinking was never on Alexander's mind; he would defeat Napoleon there and then.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Overnight the weather had remained foggy, which hid the French deployment. Just before 7am on 2 December, the allies spied what looked like a panicked retreat by the French from the Pratzen Heights. In line with their initial strategy, 40,000 Russian troops moved south towards Napoleon's right wing that had just hurried from the heights.

Over the ridge, 10,500 French lay in wait, and fighting began across the Goldbach stream near the village of Telnitz. The Goldbach would act as the dividing line between the opposing forces. The Russians and Austrians held the ascendancy in the battle's initial exchanges, and their strategy was going to plan, but their progress was checked in the village, where the late arrival of the French III Corps had swung the pendulum back in Napoleon's favour. The French Emperor's original plan had been scuppered by the enemy not moving their entire force from the centre, but being a tactical

OPPOSING FORCES



LEADERS

Napoleon I, Claude Legrand, Louis Alexandre Berthier

REGIMENTS

Imperial Guard, I Corps, III Corps, IV Corps, V Corps, Heavy cavalry and dragoon reserves

ARTILLERY

139 guns

GAME CHANGERS

The Grande Armée was battle-hardened, organised and willing to die for the emperor on the anniversary of his coronation



LEADERS

Alexander I, Francis II, Mikhail Kutusov

REGIMENTS

Imperial Guard, 2x Advance Guard, First Column, Second Column, Third Column, Fourth Column (All Russian), 3rd Austrian Infantry Brigade, Fifth Column (Austrian)

ARTILLERY

278 guns

GAME CHANGERS

The power of the Russian artillery was vastly superior to anything the French could muster

genius, he had other ways of turning events to his favour. Led by General Davout, 4,300 men had been summoned by Napoleon to march 110km (68 miles) from Vienna to bolster the French forces. In one of history's closest shaves, they managed to complete their march in 48 hours and arrive just in time to strengthen the right flank, which was buckling under the allied onslaught. In the shadow of the old fortress at Sokolnitz, the occupation of the heights changed hands frequently, but eventually Davout's men managed to end the stalemate and turn the tide to smash through the allied ranks. Despite a short rally from the Austrian O'Reilly light cavalry, the coalition troops began to flee. The battle had been turned on its head, and nearly all the allied advances had now been checked.

With the battle of the heights over, the conflict turned to the left and centre sides of the battlefield. An initial cavalry charge on the left flank saw horses from both sides slam into one another, while in the centre the Russian Imperial Guard launched into the French battalions as the coalition rallied. 3,000 grenadiers broke the first French line, and were only stopped after a timely artillery barrage. The imperial guard regrouped to allow their artillery to exact revenge and bombard the French, who had formed defensive squares on the battlefield. The coalition cavalry then struck the weakened squares and captured what would be their only trophy from Austerlitz, the French Fourth Line's Eagle.

Napoleon, seeing the fight for the centre ground becoming a losing battle, sent his own imperial guard into the fray, with emphatic results. Scattered after their initial success, the Russian Imperial Guard did not maintain their line, and were easily picked off by the French counter-attack, boosted by the I Corps. This hammer blow crumbled the allied centre, and the battle for the left flank was still raging. The allied formation was split into two, and lacked a core. The French Divisions could now outmanoeuvre the scattered Russians and Austrians and attack them from all sides.

As the battle raged into the afternoon, young French General Lannes went on the offensive to the north of the battle in an attempt to strike down the Austrian divisions led by General Bagration. He almost succeeded, but was foiled after a battery of Austrian artillery made a timely intervention. The Austrians were still pegged back, but were not cut off from the rest of their force as Lannes had hoped. As Tsar Alexander took stock and analysed what had happened, he realised that the coalition high command had been torn from the main army, and unable to direct the battle effectively. Napoleon had the upper hand.

RETURN TO THE HEIGHTS

Back on the right flank, ferocious man-to-man fighting meant the French had now occupied the heights, but were unable to press home their advantage as the coalition armies fought back bravely. Both sides were wielding primitive firearms, with the most popular being the .69 calibre smoothbore musket. This weapon was inaccurate and quite ineffective, with many

2 DECEMBER 1805 AUSTERLITZ

01

DEPLOYMENT AND ORGANISATION

The coalition, with their superior numbers, were confident of complete victory but had not banked on Napoleon's strategic genius. The French emperor falsely weakened his right flank to concentrate on the opposition's weak centre and drew the Russians and Austrians into a trap on the Pratzen Heights.

02

FIGHT ON THE HEIGHTS

The Pratzen Heights was full of villages, so the combat here was tight and tense. This played into the hands of the French, whose inferior numbers would have been an issue in open warfare. Crossing the Goldbach river, the rival armies fought hard with neither able to break the deadlock.

06

ALEXANDER RE-EVALUATES

The French advantage shook the coalition leadership, who were fast losing their grip on the battle. By now, General Kutuzov had been wounded, and Alexander was in a state of shock. The Allies then proceeded to make a number of costly miscalculations as the retreat began and the Tsar fled.

04 BATTLE OF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS

The coalition centre was not as weak as Napoleon had planned. The Russian Imperial Guard made initial gains against its French equivalent, but was pegged back after an artillery barrage. The Russians responded with a bombardment of their own, resulting in their greatest successes in the battle.

05 FRENCH BREAKTHROUGH

The success was short-lived as the French numbers were boosted by the arrival of the I Corps. The Russian Imperial Guard was first pushed back and then routed as the French swarmed forward in a devastating counterattack.

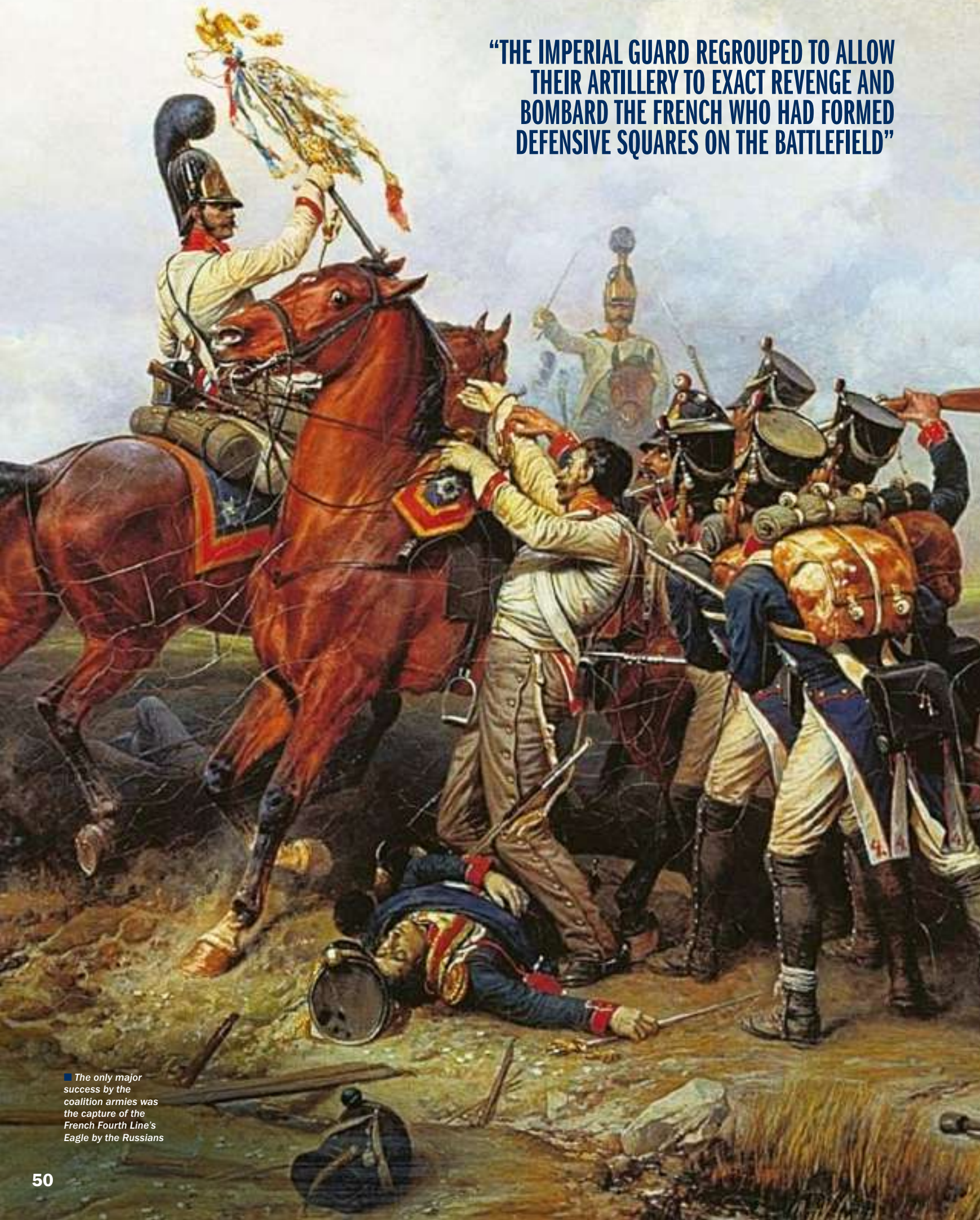
03 CAVALRY CLASH ON THE LEFT FLANK

On the opposite flank, cavalry from both sides went into battle with the French mamelukes and Grenadiers up against the Russian Uhlans and Austrian Hussars. On the northern edge of the battlefield, French General Lannes unleashed an attack on General Bagration in an attempt to cut him off from the main battle.

07 RETREAT TO THE ICE

Now in full retreat, the coalition departed the battlefield rapidly to avoid more losses on the battlefield. Behind them lay a series of frozen ponds. In the heat of battle, many of the fleeing soldiers drowned in the icy waters, while the rest were rounded up and taken prisoner.

**“THE IMPERIAL GUARD REGROUPED TO ALLOW
THEIR ARTILLERY TO EXACT REVENGE AND
BOMBARD THE FRENCH WHO HAD FORMED
DEFENSIVE SQUARES ON THE BATTLEFIELD”**



■ The only major success by the coalition armies was the capture of the French Fourth Line's Eagle by the Russians

shots not hitting the target sometimes resulting in friendly fire. This meant much of the battle saw fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

Using both bayonets and sabres, Austerlitz was a ferocious battle, with neither side holding back. The close-quarter fighting was backed up by artillery barrages from both sides. Although the allies had many more guns at their disposal, the organisation of the French troops meant their shots were more effective and frequent. This lack of cohesion in the coalition also meant that the powerful Austrian cavalry could not be utilised effectively, and was often found too far to the rear to do any lasting damage to the French lines. In the latter stages of the battle, the Tsar saw that victory was becoming more and more unlikely, so fled the field. It was also at this time that allied General Kutuzov received a wound and had to be treated in the safety of a reserve unit. The coalition was now leaderless, and unable to co-ordinate effective attacks. An unsupported Russian Ulan attack on the north flank that suffered 400 casualties demonstrated this.

Behind the Russian and Austrian regiments lay a number of frozen ponds known as the Satschan Mere. As the French piled forward, the allies had no option but to flee across the ice. Saddled with heavy artillery and the remaining horses, the winter lake could not hold the weight, and as the French drew near, many fell into the freezing water and became the victim of the sub-zero temperatures. The remainder of the troops were bombarded by artillery or taken prisoner as soon as they reached the lake's shores.

Contemporary accounts have claimed that the number of allied deaths in the Satschan Mere were greatly exaggerated, but nonetheless, the coalition divisions were scattered and leaderless, and defeat was now almost inevitable. 11,000 Russians and 4,000 Austrians lay dead in the mud as a victorious Grande Armée mopped up the remaining coalition soldiers on the battlefield. 12,000 soldiers were captured, and the French helped themselves to 180 cannons from the Russian artillery. The weary French could now rest as the Russians retreated back to their



■ Napoleon meets Francis II following the Battle of Austerlitz

homeland and the Austrians surrendered to their French enemy.

THE AFTERMATH

Napoleon may not have defeated his adversaries as comprehensively as he would have liked, but he out-thought and out-fought both the Austrians and Russians. His triumph was so great that many see the victory as when the Emperor began to lose touch with reality and began to concoct more ambitious ideas for his own Napoleonic Europe.

On the evening of 2 December, Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein, rode into the French encampment to negotiate a peace agreement. The hierarchy of the Grande Armée agreed, and Napoleon and Francis met two days later. After extended discussions, the result was the Peace of Pressburg. The treaty was a necessity for Austria, who had seen their lands taken and army in ruins, but the agreement greatly benefitted the First French Republic. France now had Trieste and Dalmatia under its rule, as well as a vast area east of the Rhine that bordered Bavarian and Prussian lands. Napoleon was keen to appease Prussia, so they did not enter a conflict with the French.

As a result, he allowed his defeated foe free reign over Hanover.

The Austrians fared much worse than any other nation, and were forced to pay 40 million Francs in reparations. Most significantly, the Holy Roman Empire dissolved after 1,000 years as a kingdom. The victory of a republican army against a monarchical one was an important turning point in warfare.

In the Russian Army, aristocrats still held the top roles and order was maintained by regular beatings. This meant the officers were often poorly trained, especially in comparison to the Grande Armée, who were well drilled by Napoleon and could easily adapt to new strategies and tactics. There were even reports that Russian general Friedrich Wilhelm Buxhowden was drunk during the battle. With the destruction of the Third Coalition, the political and military structures and attitudes of old were eradicated.

The picture of post-Austerlitz Europe was a bleak one for all, bar Napoleon. The Third Coalition was in ruins, and with the Russians out of the picture, only Britain remained in the way of a confident and powerful French Emperor. The peace was not to last, however, and when the Prussians became more sceptical of the French in 1806, Europe was on the road to war once more.



■ Russians retreat across the frozen lake Satschan, but Napoleon's cannons shatter the ice and many are drowned

THE PENINSULAR WAR

THE OCCUPATION OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA DRAINED FRENCH RESOURCES TO BREAKING POINT

In a painting by Francisco Goya, French Imperial Mamelukes charge rioting citizens in Madrid on 2 May 1808. This suppression began the Peninsular War

DOS DE MAYO UPRISING

The French occupied Madrid in March 1808 and deposed the Spanish royal family, replacing them with Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon's brother) as king. A popular uprising in Madrid was brutally suppressed with hundreds being executed, prompting a wider revolution.

May 1808

1807

July 1808-January 1809

August 1808

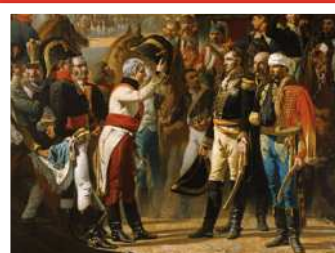
FRENCH INVASION OF PORTUGAL

On 18 October 1807, more than 100,000 French troops crossed the Spanish frontier and on 30 November, General Junot occupied Lisbon without bloodshed. The French were stationed in Spain where they uneasily co-existed with their then Spanish allies.

Left: The Portuguese royal family were forced to flee to Brazil in the wake of the French occupation of Lisbon

FRENCH ESCALATION

Following a Spanish victory at Bailén in July 1808, Napoleon personally intervened with 200,000 veteran troops. His armies forced the small British force under Sir John Moore to evacuate Spain by sea. Moore was killed at Corunna but his army was saved.



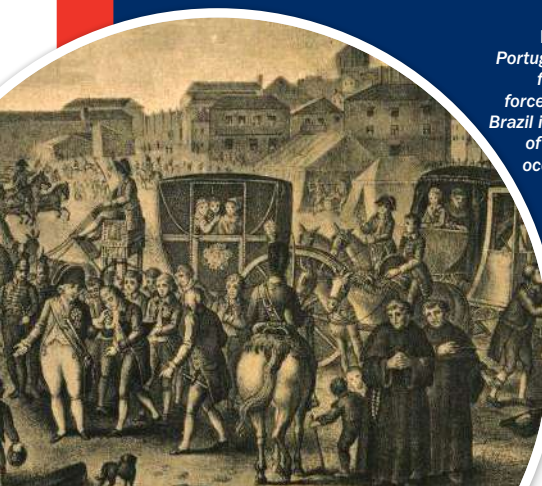
BATTLE OF VIMEIRO

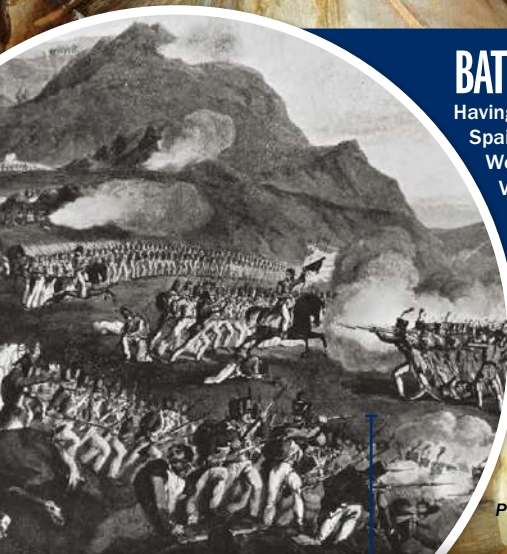
An Anglo-Portuguese army under General Arthur Wellesley defeated Junot at Vimeiro, forcing the French to evacuate Portugal by agreement. However, Wellesley was accused of letting the French escape and was temporarily replaced.



Left: The Battle of Vimeiro was the first occasion where Napoleonic offensive tactics failed against British infantry line defences

Left: The French were forced to surrender almost 18,000 men after the Battle of Bailén. This decisive Spanish victory ironically led to the French occupying Spain in huge numbers





BATTLE OF BUÇACO

Having struggled to re-enter Spain, the reinstated Wellesley (now known as Viscount Wellington) fights a tough but victorious battle at Buçaco against Marshal Masséna. The clash is famous for the role of the reconstituted Portuguese Army in the victory.

■ *Left: The important Portuguese contribution at Buçaco emphasised that the Peninsular War was a truly allied fight against the French*

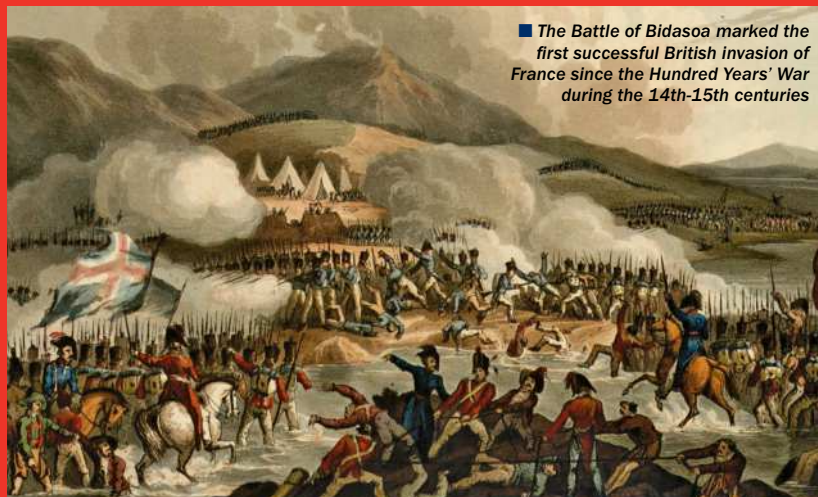
September 1810

January-April 1812



BATTLE OF VITORIA

Wellington defeated Joseph Bonaparte at Vitoria after marching 121,000 British, Spanish and Portuguese troops from northern Portugal. The battle marked the collapse of Napoleonic rule in Spain.



■ *The Battle of Bidasoa marked the first successful British invasion of France since the Hundred Years' War during the 14th-15th centuries*

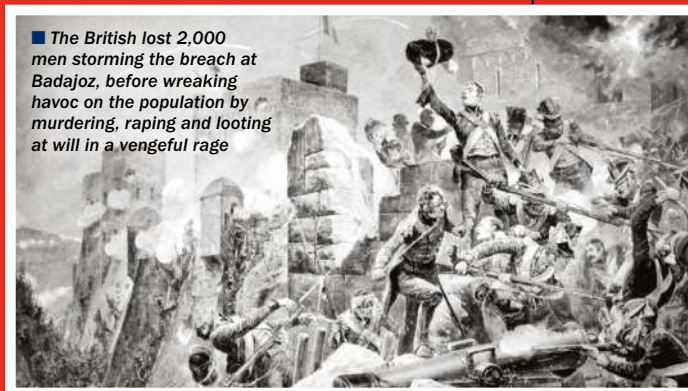
WELLINGTON INVADES FRANCE

After Vitoria, Wellington fought a hard campaign to enter southern France with his army across the River Bidasoa. There was fierce fighting at Vera but the Allies crossed the river on 7 October 1813.

June 1813

October 1813

April 1814



■ *The British lost 2,000 men storming the breach at Badajoz, before wreaking havoc on the population by murdering, raping and looting at will in a vengeful rage*

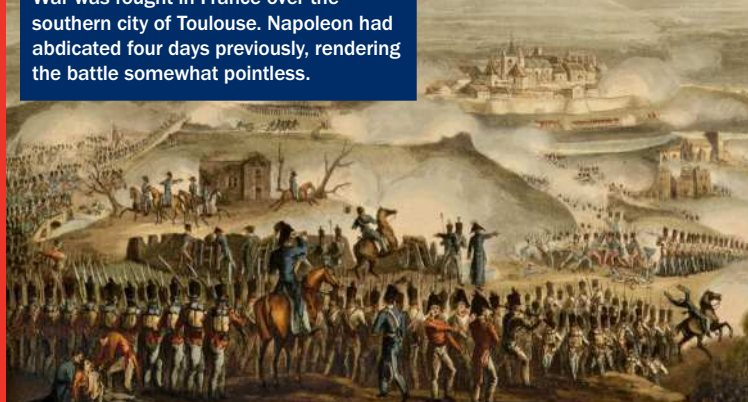
SIEGES OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND BADAJOZ

These fortresses on the Spanish-Portuguese border had to be overcome for Wellington to advance into Spain. However, they proved hard to capture and the British lost thousands of men taking them, particularly at Badajoz.

BATTLE OF TOULOUSE

The last major battle of the Peninsular War was fought in France over the southern city of Toulouse. Napoleon had abdicated four days previously, rendering the battle somewhat pointless.

■ *The French defended Toulouse with 42,000 men while Wellington's victorious army had around 50,000 troops, a fifth of which were Spanish*



Images: Alamy

HOTSPOTS OF THE PENINSULA 1807-14

THE FIGHT FOR IBERIA WAS AN INTENSE STRUGGLE, FOUGHT ACROSS THREE COUNTRIES AND CONTAINED A MYRIAD OF BLOODY BATTLES AND SIEGES

1 BATTLE OF VIMEIRO

VIMEIRO, PORTUGAL 21 AUGUST 1808

General Junot attacks Wellington's army in a classic French column formation. The British, fighting in lines, beat off Junot's troops who lose 2,000 men and 13 cannon.

2 SECOND SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA

ZARAGOZA, SPAIN 20 DECEMBER 1808 - 20 FEBRUARY 1809

The French capture the city from the Spanish in a bloody battle that becomes noted for its brutality. An estimated 54,000 Spaniards, both soldiers and civilians, are killed through disease and street fighting.

3 BATTLE OF TALAVERA

TALAVERA, SPAIN 27-28 JULY 1809

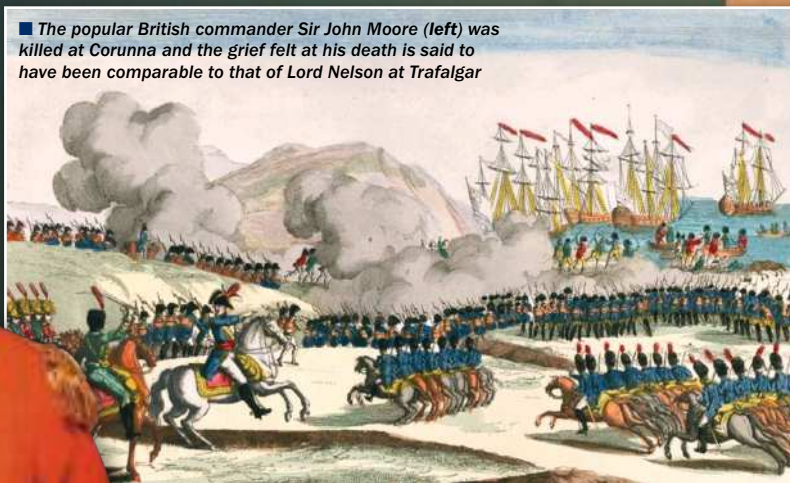
Wellington commands 55,000 men, but 35,000 are uncooperative Spaniards who largely flee in front of a French force of 46,000. The British take the brunt of the fighting and the French are eventually defeated by artillery fire.

4 BATTLE OF CORUNNA

CORUNNA, SPAIN 16 JANUARY 1809

Arguably a Napoleonic Dunkirk, Corunna is a successful naval evacuation of some 27,000 British troops from Spain. Hotly pursued by a numerically superior French army, the victorious defensive battle secures a British escape.

■ The popular British commander Sir John Moore (left) was killed at Corunna and the grief felt at his death is said to have been comparable to that of Lord Nelson at Trafalgar



4

BATTLE OF BUÇACO

27 SEPTEMBER 1810 BUSSACO, PORTUGAL

SIEGE OF ALMEIDA

25 JULY - 27 AUGUST 1810 ALMEIDA, PORTUGAL

6

BATTLE OF SALAMANCA

22 JULY 1812 SALAMANCA, SPAIN

3

BATTLE OF FUENTES DE OÑORO

3-5 MAY 1811 FUENTES DE OÑORO, SPAIN

1

FRENCH OCCUPATION OF LISBON

30 NOVEMBER 1807 LISBON, PORTUGAL

5

BATTLE OF ALBUERA

16 MAY 1811 ALBUERA, SPAIN

SIEGE OF BADAJOZ

16 MARCH - 6 APRIL 1812 BADAJOZ, SPAIN

SIEGE OF CÁDIZ

5 FEBRUARY 1810 - 24 AUGUST 1812 CÁDIZ, SPAIN

BATTLE OF BAROSSA

5 MARCH 1811 PLAYA DE BAROSSA, SPAIN

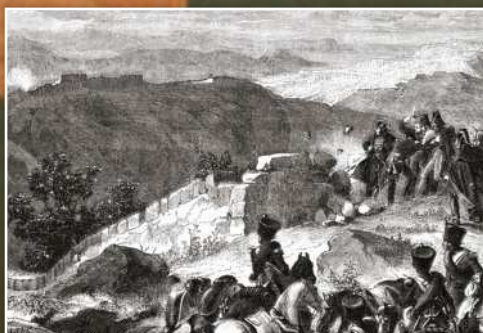
“THE FRENCH MAKE A SERIES OF ERRORS THAT ALLOW WELLINGTON TO CROSS THE RIVER ZADORRA WITH SEVERAL DIVISIONS. IN THE CHAOS, THE BRITISH TAKE TREASURE WORTH 5.5 MILLION FRANCS”

DOS DE MAYO UPRISING
2 MAY 1808 MADRID, SPAIN

BATTLE OF BAILÉN
16-19 JULY 1808 BAILÉN, SPAIN

5 LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS
LISBON, PORTUGAL 1810-11

Built to defend Lisbon from land attacks, the British defensive lines stretch from the Atlantic coast to the impassable River Tagus. 25,000 troops, 100 redoubts and 450 cannon successfully protect the Portuguese capital.



■ **Left: Marshal Masséna** before the lines. The French realised they were impenetrable and Portugal was saved from invasion

SIEGE OF SAN SEBASTIÁN
7 JULY – 8 SEPTEMBER 1813 SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN

BATTLE OF ORTHEZ
27 FEBRUARY 1814 ORTHEZ, FRANCE

BATTLE OF SAN MARCIAL
31 AUGUST 1813 NEAR IRUN, SPAIN

BATTLE OF TOULOUSE
10 APRIL 1814 TOULOUSE, FRANCE



■ Colin Campbell leading a 'forlorn hope' at the Siege of San Sebastián. Then aged 21, Campbell later became a field marshal

6 SIEGE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO
CIUDAD RODRIGO, SPAIN 7-20 JANUARY 1812

The fortress covers the northern gateway from Portugal to Spain. The British pound the walls until two breaches are created. Wellington then orders an assault that succeeds at great cost.

7 SIEGE OF BURGOS
BURGOS, SPAIN 19 SEPTEMBER – 21 OCTOBER 1812

2,000 Frenchmen garrison the Castilian capital. Wellington's besieging force is hampered by continual rainfall and a lack of artillery. When French relief columns arrive, Wellington withdraws.

8 BATTLE OF VITORIA
VITORIA, SPAIN 21 JUNE 1813

The French make a series of errors that allow Wellington to cross the River Zadorra with several divisions. In the chaos, the British take treasure worth 5.5 million francs.



■ Despite being unknown today, the Siege of Burgos is significant in that it marked the only true defeat of Wellington's career

KEY BATTLE SALAMANCA

WELLINGTON WAS CONFIRMED AS A MILITARY GENIUS ON 22 JULY 1812 WITH THIS DECISIVE VICTORY THAT SIGNALLED THE END OF FRENCH DOMINATION IN SPAIN

In early 1812, Wellington captured the French strongholds of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz near the Spanish-Portuguese border. He advanced his allied British, Spanish and Portuguese armies of 49,000 men into Spain and made for Madrid. Confronting him were 50,000 French troops commanded by Marshal Marmont. Wellington held the advantage as Marmont's forces were strung out in an arc stretching from Oviedo in the north, to Avila near Madrid. In the middle of this arc was the city of Salamanca. From 17 June 1812, the two armies shadowed each other warily around the city for a month. Finally on 22 July, Marmont attempted to outflank Wellington but overstretched his forces. Upon hearing this Wellington declared, "Marmont is lost" and rode to battle.

"MY GOD! I NEVER SAW ANYTHING SO BEAUTIFUL IN ALL MY LIFE. THE DAY IS YOURS"

1. THE FRENCH COMMANDER IS SLAIN

Marshal Marmont realises he has overextended the left of his army but is severely wounded by a howitzer shell before he can alert General Thomières, who commands the left flank. General Bonnet replaces Marmont.

2. PAKENHAM ATTACKS THOMIÈRES

Wellington's brother-in-law, Adjutant-General Pakenham is ordered to attack Thomières with the 3rd Division of British infantry. Despite heavy fire from the French, Pakenham smashes through Thomières's men inflicting heavy casualties, including Thomières himself who is killed.

3. THE HEAVY CAVALRY CHARGE

General Maucune's division is attacked. He orders his infantrymen to form squares. This proves to be a costly mistake as they are destroyed by British line infantry and a cavalry charge led by Major General Le Marchant. However, Le Marchant is mortally wounded.



4. WELLINGTON CAN SENSE A VICTORY

Le Marchant's dragoons crush eight French battalions with sabres. The entire left flank is destroyed. Wellington exclaims to his chief of cavalry, "My God! I never saw anything so beautiful in all my life. The day is yours!"

■ Marmont was forced to retire to France after the battle to recover his strength

5. ATTACKING THE FRENCH CENTRE

Major General Cole's 4th Division and General Pack's Portuguese brigade are repulsed trying to take the Greater Arapile hill where the French centre, led by General Bonnet, is positioned. 40 gun batteries firing on the hill assist the French.

6. CLAUSEL FIGHTS BACK

Bonnet is severely wounded and is replaced by General Clausel who orders a counterattack against Cole. However, Wellington commits his reserves of 5,500 men under Major General Clinton's 6th Division. Meanwhile, Marshal Beresford leads his Portuguese brigade against Clausel's left flank.

7. FIGHTING AT DUSK

As night falls, Clausel is pushed back. Major-General Campbell's 1st Division captures the Greater Arapile and Wellington throws the fresh 12th Light Dragoons into battle to pursue the retreating French.

8. FERREY'S LAST STAND

Covering the retreat, General Ferrey forms his right-flank division into a single line. Clinton's 6th Division is initially repulsed but Wellington orders his artillery to crossfire through the centre of Ferrey's line. Ferrey is killed and his division is broken.

9. FLIGHT TO ALBA DE TORMES

The French retreat across a bridge at Alba de Tormes in disorder. The Spanish battalion guarding the crossings have left their positions without informing Wellington and the remnants of Marmont's army are able to escape. This greatly angers Wellington.

10. A SWIFT VICTORY

In only four hours, the French forces have lost more than 14,000 men to just more than 5,000 allied casualties. It is a remarkable success for Wellington who remarks, "I never saw an army get such a beating in so short a time."

THE IMPACT OF SALAMANCA

WELLINGTON HAD ACHIEVED ONE OF HIS GREATEST MILITARY SUCCESSES TO DATE, AND THE VICTORY RESONATED FAR BEYOND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

For the first time in his career, the usually cautious Wellington had won a decisive victory at Salamanca by taking the offensive. This marked him out as a true rival to Napoleon. Indeed, the French General Foy wrote that Salamanca rose Wellington's reputation "almost to the level of Marlborough" and was "a battle in the style of Frederick the Great."

After the battle, Wellington was able to enter Madrid on 6 August, although he was forced to retreat to Portugal in the autumn. Nonetheless, from that point on the French were reluctant to take the offensive against the allied armies in Spain and this, combined



with a severe loss in manpower and resources, led to their ultimate expulsion from the Peninsula. Salamanca also had a propaganda impact across Europe and gave heart to those who were committed to defeating the French Empire. When Napoleon heard about the defeat on 2 September 1812, during his invasion of Russia, one of his generals noticed that "anxiety was clearly visible on his usually serene brow." This was five days before the apocalyptic Battle of Borodino and the news of Wellington's victory can have done nothing for the already severely depleted morale of the Grande Armée.



Usually defensive in nature, Wellington shocked Europe with his aggressive victory at Salamanca

HEAD TO HEAD

THE PENINSULAR WAR POPULARISED THE TERM 'GUERRILLA' (SPANISH FOR 'LITTLE WAR') AND THESE INSURGENTS FOUGHT A GRIMLY EFFECTIVE STRUGGLE AGAINST FRENCH OCCUPIERS

LINE INFANTRYMAN

LOYALTY: FRENCH EMPIRE **YEARS IN OPERATION:** 1808-14

FIREARM

Imperial soldiers carried Model 1777 'Charleville' muskets. Unlike other European muskets, the Charleville could be easily taken apart and be thoroughly cleaned, a capability that increased its efficiency and reliability.

UNIFORM

Napoleon's troops wore famously elaborate uniforms for identification and to emphasise the glory of France. However, they were largely impractical and made soldiers easy targets for their opponents.

TACTICS

The guerrillas pinned down 250,000 troops and so enormous numbers of men were required to simply protect messengers, escort supply trains and hold territory. Communications were also greatly hampered and movements were slow.

DISCIPLINE

Guerrilla warfare disheartened Imperial troops because of the great danger combined with little glory. Fearful soldiers became undisciplined and their frustration frequently resulted in desertion or vengeful attacks on the Spanish population.

TOTAL



A DEPLORABLE OCCUPATION

The French response to the increasing insurgency in Spain was discreditable. In 1810, Napoleon created six military governments in the country and gave the governors power to collect taxes in order to make the Spanish support the war effort with their own money. This act was, naturally, highly unpopular and each governor effectively became a provincial autocrat, which made co-ordinated efforts against the growing numbers of guerrillas difficult.

Winning 'hearts and minds' was also no concern to the occupying French. The Imperial troops lived off the land and officers habitually ransomed prisoners, seized property and used extortion to get what they wanted. This behaviour greatly contributed to the widespread guerrilla uprisings against them.

■ **Right:** The French occupation of Spain was heavy-handed and immediately unpopular with violence committed on both sides for years



■ Far left: A depiction of Catalan guerrillas. Armed Spanish men and women fought a brutal but effective war, causing the death and disappearance of tens of thousands of Napoleon's soldiers



THE BATTLE OF ARLABÁN

One of the Spanish guerrillas' most famous ambushes took place on 25 May 1811. Between 3,000-4,500 guerrillas hid in undergrowth for four hours in a mountain pass in the Basque Country, while a large French convoy drove past on the road below them. This convoy consisted of 150 carriages, 1,050 prisoners (most of them British) and an escort of 1,600 French soldiers. The guerrillas attacked the central part of the convoy and were assisted by the British prisoners in overpowering the soldiers. The prisoners were released and the Spanish captured all manner of supplies and weapons. The convoy was reckoned to be valued in the millions.

SPANISH GUERRILLA

LOYALTY: KINGDOM OF SPAIN YEARS IN OPERATION: 1808-14

FIREARM

Guerrillas were usually armed with the Spanish Army Model 1752 Musket. It was a conventional weapon used in many armies and was reliable enough to remain in wide circulation until well into the 1850s.

TACTICS

The guerrillas ambushed convoys and columns and attacked encampments. They were a dangerous 'invisible' army that moved quickly and used their intricate knowledge of the harsh landscape with great success.

UNIFORM

Fighters wore a blend of civilian and military clothing, depending on the unit they fought in. Some guerrilla soldiers deliberately dressed like civilians in order to decrease visibility while others wore uniforms, so as to better display their military credentials.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline was a loose concept; guerrilla bands consisted of fluctuating numbers of soldiers, peasants and even criminals such as deserters, bandits and smugglers. Nonetheless, they were highly effective, especially when they were aided by local civilians.

TOTAL



“SOME GUERRILLAS DELIBERATELY DRESSED LIKE CIVILIANS IN ORDER TO DECREASE VISIBILITY”



Illustrations: Jean-Michel Girard / The Art Agency

HEROES & COMMANDERS

THE PENINSULAR WAR'S MULTIPLE COMBATANTS RESULTED IN A MULTINATIONAL MELTING POT OF COMMANDING PERSONALITIES WITH TALES OF COURAGE, CO-OPERATION, DISAPPOINTMENT AND EVEN THEFT

ARTHUR WELLESLEY

IBERIA TRANSFORMED THIS BRITISH SOLDIER FROM A GENERAL INTO A DUKE

YEARS: 1769-1852 COUNTRY: GREAT BRITAIN

Above all others, it was the efforts of Arthur Wellesley that ensured an Allied victory over the French in Iberia. Britain's involvement in the peninsula originated in its ancient alliance with Portugal and its implacable hostility to France. Despite these important reasons for intervention, the British never had a large army in the region and their famous success in the war was mostly because of Wellesley's leadership.

Having earned his military reputation in India, Wellesley first arrived in Portugal in 1808 as a lieutenant general and defeated the French at Vimeiro. This initial victory forced the French to retreat into Spain, but Wellesley was temporarily replaced for reluctantly allowing the enemy to leave the country in British ships. In his absence, the British had to evacuate their army from Spain after Napoleon arrived with hundreds of

thousands of troops and their commander, Sir John Moore, was killed. This led to Wellesley resuming his command of British forces in Portugal in 1809. From this time, he fought a slow, difficult, but successful campaign.

Despite constantly being outnumbered and short of resources, Wellesley won a gradual string of victories that have since become famous, including Talavera, Salamanca and Vitoria to name but a few. Many of these successes were extremely hard-fought, such as the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, but they always resulted in forcing the French to give ground or rethink their strategy. By 1813, Wellesley ejected Napoleon's troops from Iberia and had ended the war on French territory at Toulouse.

The key to Wellesley's success was his clever use of terrain, logistics, intelligence and discipline. He also did his best to stop the worst excesses of his soldiers against the local population, though he was not always successful. Ultimately, he described his strategy as forward-looking, "I made my campaigns of ropes. If anything went wrong, I tied a knot; and went on."



JEAN-DE-DIEU SOULT

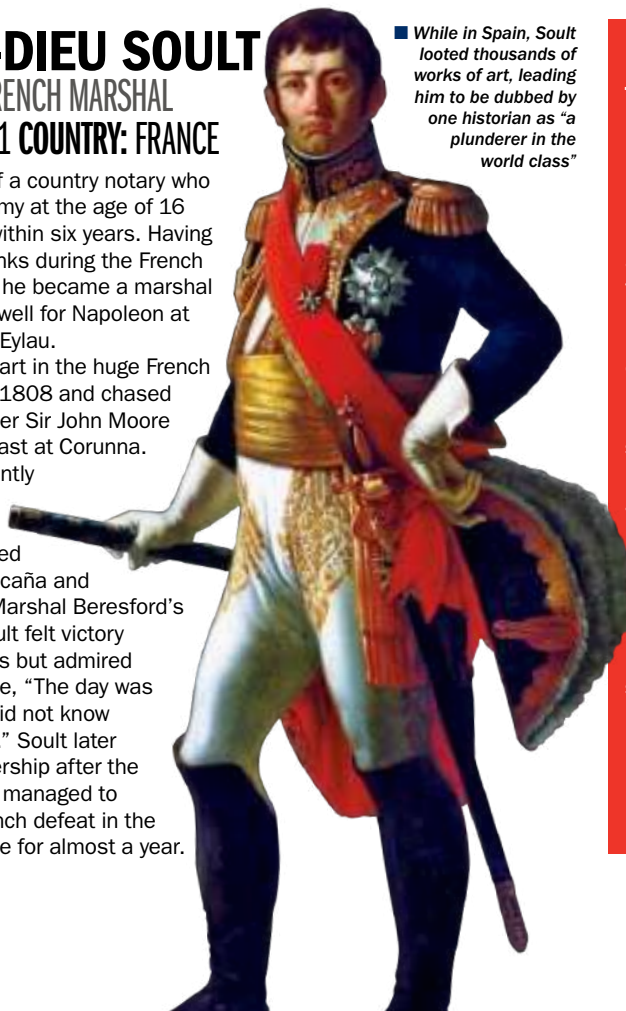
THE STUBBORN FRENCH MARSHAL

YEARS: 1769-1851 COUNTRY: FRANCE

Soult was the son of a country notary who joined the French Army at the age of 16 and was an officer within six years. Having risen through the ranks during the French Revolutionary Wars, he became a marshal in 1804 and fought well for Napoleon at Austerlitz, Jena and Eylau.

He took a major part in the huge French invasion of Spain in 1808 and chased the British Army under Sir John Moore all the way to the coast at Corunna. Soult was subsequently

surprised by Wellington at Porto, but he defeated a Spanish army at Ocaña and then badly mauled Marshal Beresford's army at Albuera. Soult felt victory should have been his but admired his enemies' courage, "The day was mine, and yet they did not know it and would not run." Soult later provided great leadership after the Battle of Vitoria and managed to stave off a total French defeat in the Peninsula and France for almost a year.



■ While in Spain, Soult looted thousands of works of art, leading him to be dubbed by one historian as "a plunderer in the world class"

WILLIAM BERESFORD

THE BRITISH COMMANDER OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY

YEARS: 1768-1854 COUNTRY: GREAT BRITAIN, PORTUGAL

Beresford held a unique position during the Peninsular War. Although he was an Anglo-Irish officer in the British Army, he developed affection for Portugal and helped to restore the country's confidence following the French occupation.

After governing Madeira for the king of Portugal, the exiled Portuguese government realised they needed a commander-in-chief to retrain and reinvigorate their demoralised army. Wellington recommended Beresford who was made a marshal in 1809. Beresford removed corrupt officers and used vigorous discipline to produce a small but effective army that was trained on British lines. His reforms proved themselves at the Battle of Buçaco when Portuguese troops greatly aided the outnumbered British troops to produce a victory.

Beresford now commanded a multinational corps in Wellington's army numbering 30,000 men, but barely scraped a bloody victory at Albuera. Afterwards, his career went into decline as a field commander but he remained Wellington's second-in-command and played an important role at the Battle of Toulouse.

■ Right: Marshal Beresford in 1839. After the end of the Peninsular War, he managed the Portuguese Army for five years despite escalating political tension





■ During his time in Spain, Masséna was accompanied by his mistress who he disguised as a dragoon

ANDRÉ MASSÉNA

THE COMMANDER WHO WAS BROKEN BY THE PENINSULA
YEARS: 1758-1817 COUNTRY: FRANCE

Masséna had originally joined the French Army and risen to the rank of warrant officer, before he was discharged in 1789. Following two years as a smuggler, he was voted back in the army and by 1793, he was a general.

The rising star fought with great distinction during Napoleon's Italian campaigns and contributed to many French victories. He was made a marshal in 1804 and again proved his worth in the 1809-war against the Fifth Coalition, but he became unstuck when he was posted to Spain in 1810.

Masséna initially did well by conducting successful sieges at Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida but he then lost the Battle of Buçaco, before halting his invading army at Wellington's formidable border defences at the Lines of Torres Vedras. Masséna retreated into Spain where he was again defeated at Fuentes de Oñoro and was then recalled by a disappointed emperor.



■ Agustina's military exploits became legendary and she earned the attention of writers and artists such as Lord Byron and Francisco Goya

AGUSTINA DE ARAGÓN

THE DEFIANT DEFENDER OF ZARAGOZA KNOWN AS THE 'SPANISH JOAN OF ARC'
YEARS: 1786-1857 COUNTRY: SPAIN

Born as Agustina Raimunda María Saragossa Domènech, this heroine of the Peninsular War became a famous symbol of Spanish resistance against the French invaders.

Agustina was the wife of a Spanish soldier and found herself trapped in besieged Zaragoza in 1808, at a time when most Spanish cities had capitulated. Though they were vastly outgunned the Zaragozans put up a spirited defence where Agustina performed her most famous action.

On 15 June 1808, the French stormed the main gateway as Agustina was feeding defenders on the ramparts. Although she witnessed defenders breaking ranks, being bayoneted by the French, Agustina ran forward, loaded a cannon and fired it at point blank range, rallying the Spaniards.

The French eventually took Zaragoza but Agustina escaped and joined Wellington's army. She is said to have obtained the rank of captain, the only woman ever to do so during the conflict.

FRANCISCO JAVIER CASTAÑOS

THE UNSUNG VICTOR OF A MAJOR SPANISH VICTORY
YEARS: 1758-1852 COUNTRY: SPAIN

Castaños was a dignified and intelligent general who won the first great Spanish victory against the French in 1808. After crushing a major revolt in Madrid in May, the French dispatched columns to crush what were believed to be isolated rebellions, including the main army of 20,000 men under General Pierre Dupont. Castaños's force outnumbered the French but his soldiers were inexperienced and untested. Nevertheless, Dupont made the grave error of spreading his men out along too thin a line along the River Guadalquivir. Castaños split his own force into three and attacked the French in separate locations.

Over three days, from 16-19 July 1808, the two sides fought each other until the Spanish attacked the rear of the French and forced them to capitulate at Bailén. Almost 18,000 French troops surrendered and the battle encouraged Napoleon's enemies across Europe. Castaños himself continued to fight throughout the war and was valued by Wellington for his reliability.



■ Castaños's victory at Bailén was the first major land success against Napoleon's forces, proving the French could be beaten

BRITAIN'S ORIGINAL ELITE SHARPSHOOTERS

A VITAL COMPONENT IN WELLINGTON'S VICTORY OVER NAPOLEON, THE 95TH RIFLES WAS THE BRITISH ARMY'S FIRST ELITE CORPS. BUT WHAT MADE THEM SUCH REMARKABLE FIGHTERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD?





In modern warfare you have the Delta Force and Navy SEALs. In the Second World War you had commandoes and paratroopers. In the Napoleonic Wars, there was the 95th Rifle Regiment.

Founded in January 1800, the regiment was a direct response to the British Empire's desperate need to update its infantry. During the Revolutionary War, American troops and their allies easily outmanoeuvred and outthought the British Army using new skirmish tactics and irregular units. The American strategy focused on light troops who would aim and fire with their superior rifles.

The British redcoats, on the other hand, used old-style muskets with woeful accuracy that was outclassed by the American alternative. German Jaeger mercenaries, whose role was as an auxiliary to the main infantry, wielded the best rifles in the British Army. What the British needed was a specialised corps that was part of the regular army, rather than a paid auxiliary force that wasn't.

After years of debate in the War Office, the result was the creation of the 95th Rifle Regiment by Colonel Cootte Manningham and Lieutenant Colonel The Honourable William Stewart. The two officers addressed the Government, explaining that a corps trained in precision firing, with arms to match, would be an essential part of the progression of the British Army. They had been influenced by British Commanding Officer Colonel Baron de Rottenburg, who had set out a training manual that the two used as a basis for their idea. The plan was approved and the Peninsular Barracks in Winchester was designated as the 95th's brand-new headquarters.

They would be expertly trained at Shorncliffe army camp along with the 43rd and 52nd regiments. It was decided that the new unit



■ The Battle of Waterloo is perhaps the most famous engagement to feature the 95th

would be dressed in green (copied from German Jaegers) for basic camouflage, and armed with the new and improved Baker Rifle. Designed as a special corps, the 95th would work alongside the traditional redcoat infantry, but would go at its own pace and under its own orders. Unlike the main body of the armed forces who fought in tightly drilled ranks, the riflemen were taught to use their own initiative to get out of sticky situations and take the fight to the enemy rather than following strict direction. They were literally the special forces of their day.

Four months after forming in 1800, these 'sharpshooters, scouts and skirmishers' were sent to Spain to assist the British Expeditionary Force in the War of the Second Coalition. The Ferrol Campaign turned out to be a loss for the British, but the riflemen still made an excellent account of themselves and their fresh tactics were very effective against the Spanish and French troops. Tales tell of the regiment holding a hillside position against waves of Spanish attacks despite the co-founder of the Rifles, William Stewart, being severely wounded from a shot to the chest. Their resolute defence demonstrated the Rifles now an essential part of the army. The British

defeat was blamed on the incompetence of the generals and wasn't attributed to the 95th Rifles in any way. The next major engagement that the regiment was involved in was the 1801 Battle of Copenhagen. Led by Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson, the British fleet overcame its Dano-Norwegian counterparts as the Royal Navy recorded a strategic victory. The 95th was used on the decks of British ships, taking devastatingly accurate pot shots at the rival ships' crews. A year later, on Christmas Day, the regiment's name was officially changed to the 95th Rifle Brigade.

Originally made up of trained mercenaries who could wield the Baker with ease, gradually more and more soldiers from the regular infantry joined up. However, the recruitment methods of the 95th are legendary, if a little exaggerated. Rumours persist that candidates would be encouraged to get drunk, so were more inclined to join. There is even a story of an officer handcuffing himself to a recruit and only agreeing to release him if he agreed to sign up. Whatever the methods were, joining the 95th was still a much more attractive proposition than the regular army. After the name change and a brief expedition to liberate

BAKER RIFLE VS BROWN BESS MUSKET

Extensive training and a stylish green jacket weren't enough for the 95th, it needed a rifle that could pack a punch as well



BAKER RIFLE

With a high rate of fire and a good shooting distance, the Baker was the preferred rifle of the British Army's elite until 1839.

BROWN BESS MUSKET

From 1722, the Brown Bess was the standard-issue musket of the British Army. It was a good all-rounder, but ultimately paled in comparison to the Baker Rifle.

Hanover from the French in 1805, the 95th was summoned to South America in 1807 for an all-new mission. The Napoleonic Wars had spread across the Atlantic and the British forces were battling Spain for domination of the colonies. The 95th was extremely useful in the Battle for Buenos Aires, acting like modern-day snipers and striking the fortress from the safety of the city cathedral's towers. The age of the 95th Rifles had begun.

The regiment was ahead of its time. The unorthodox methods were simply not understood by some generals and their innovative approach shocked many rival armies into action, as they attempted to form their own hastily arranged equivalents. Even the 95th's hierarchy was different to the main body of the army. Officers were actively encouraged to form close bonds with their men – playing games and dancing, it was suggested, would stop the company from smoking, drinking and chasing women. Essentially, there was a big drive to keep the men's minds focused and play down social barriers – they were that important to the army. Their importance was shown in training as well, where they were given the opportunity to improve their marksmanship with the luxury of practicing with live ammunition.

The 95th was equally effective in small encounters as it was in large pitched battles. An example of this was the Battle of Cacabelos, where young rifleman Thomas Plunket showcased the true power of the regiment. The British Army was in retreat after being driven back by the French towards the Spanish city of A Coruña. Eventually, with nowhere else to run, the British were forced to take a stand outside the small village of Cacabelos. During an even battle, with around 200 men wounded on either side, the turning point came when Plunket took the initiative and advanced solo towards the French ranks. He steadied himself in a

EQUIPMENT OF A 95TH RIFLEMAN

The Regiment's uniform and kit was tailored specifically for its role. This list is from an account by 95th rifleman Sergeant Edward Costello

SHAKO

The regiment's founder, Coote Manningham, designed the uniform. Unlike the traditional redcoat, the green of a rifleman's shako hat and jacket would blend in with the surroundings, enabling them to strike with the element of surprise.

POWDER FLASK

Horn-shaped, this powder flask would hold the gunpowder required to fire the Baker Rifle. The horn was later replaced by more efficiently shaped flasks that were easier to carry and held more gunpowder.

SWORD AND BELT

If the fight got too close for comfort, the 95th soldier would attach his bayonet. This enabled the 95th to fit seamlessly into a redcoat regiment when their skirmishing duties were fulfilled.

KNAPSACK

A 95th soldier would need supplies if he were to be out in the field for an extended period of time. His backpack would contain around 35 kilograms (80 pounds) of all the equipment needed for operations.

ACCESSORIES

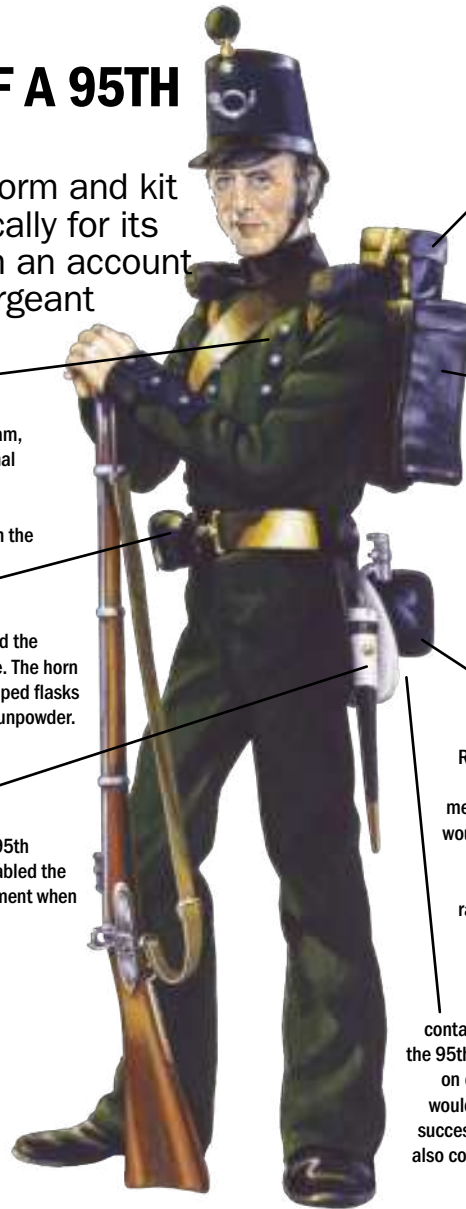
The knapsack would also contain all the personal items the rifleman needed, such as rifle brushes, extra clothes, a canteen and a blanket. The brushes were cut using a billhook that each soldier carried.

FLASK AND TIN

Rations were essential for long trips away from the mess. The average rifleman would carry ingredients that could be cooked over an open fire, as well as cold rations for food on the go.

AMMO POUCH

The ammo pouch or belt contained up to 50 rounds. As the 95th Regiment concentrated on quality over quantity, this would usually be enough for a successful skirmish. The pouch also contained the ramrod used to load the rifle.



RATE OF FIRE

The rate of fire in a rifle was less than a musket and this fact put Napoleon off using them. The gun could only fire off around two rounds a minute but these shots were much more accurate.

FIRING SYSTEM

The Baker Rifle used a flintlock system but unlike a musket, spun the ball when released, increasing its accuracy. It had a slower reload time than the Brown Bess but used leather patches wrapped around the bullet for added precision.

RANGE AND ACCURACY

A trained marksman would hope to hit a target from 200 metres (656 feet) away and a rifle's full range was over three times that of a musket. The aim was to register a hit with every shot rather than fire blindly.

RATE OF FIRE

A trained musketeer could unload up to four shots a minute with the Brown Bess. This didn't mean it was accurate though – with iron balls often spraying all around the battlefield.

FIRING SYSTEM

Muskets of the age also used the flintlock system but contained a smoothbore barrel instead of a rifled one. Quite difficult to operate, they were nevertheless a useful gun but only at their short-range.

RANGE AND ACCURACY

With a Brown Bess, a soldier would only be able to hit a target 100 metres (328 feet) away around 50 per cent of the time. The idea was to create a wall of metal where at least one shot would register a hit.



BATTLE OF ROLIÇA

With the Peninsula War only a few months old, the British Army engage in its first battle. The 95th Rifles is ready to strike

02 STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The French forces are heavily outnumbered at Roliça, so the 95th is able to pick off individual targets with ease while the British Army soak up the French musket fire.

01 TO BATTLE!

A British expeditionary force has been sent to Portugal to expel the French Army. Led by the 1st Duke of Wellington, the British forces number approximately 15,000, including the 2nd Battalion of the 95th Rifles.

03 IDEAL RIFLE ENVIRONMENT

The rocky and hilly surroundings of the mountainous Portuguese town of Roliça, is an ideal environment for the Rifle corps, which is able to hide among the rock formations and secure the higher ground.

04 FIGHTING IN THE STREETS

During one-on-one fighting, the riflemen's ability is unrivalled, so they picked off the soldiers of the 3/4th Legere with ease in brutal house-to-house combat.

05 THE BATTLE IS WON

Dominating the left flank, the 95th Rifles survive a counterattack and push the French skirmishers back. The French forces flee down the Lisbon road, leaving their artillery in the hands of the British.

THE PLUNKET POSITION

Lying down and using the strap to balance, the rifleman was well set to take aim

TARGETING THE HIERARCHY

A rifleman's speciality was to target high-ranking officers on the battlefield. A successful hit would cause panic in the enemy ranks. The increased range of the Baker Rifle enabled 95th soldiers to do this undetected.

SKIRMISHING WARFARE

Rifleman in the Napoleonic era were deployed to be lightly armed and nimble. Their accurate shots would harass the enemy lines before a full onslaught by the main company. It wasn't long until every army employed these tactics.

SHARPSHOOTING

Legend states that a rifleman of the 1st Battalion of the 95th Rifles, Thomas Plunket, struck French general Auguste François-Marie de Colbert-Chabanais from a distance of between 250 metres (820 feet) and 700 metres (2,300ft) while in this position.



"THE 95TH RIFLE BRIGADE WAS AHEAD OF ITS TIME"

laid-down position and fired a shot from long distance that struck the French Commander Colbert-Chabanais, killing him instantly. The French soldiers were shocked by this sudden assault, as they firmly believed they were out of range of any British firearm. With this, the Grande Armée ended its pursuit and the British could fight another day. After this battle, Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore praised the 95th for its gallant manner in the face of superior numbers. The French would proceed with caution if they ever caught sight of the 95th Rifles again.

The specialised corps showed its versatility and prowess once more at the Battle of San Marcial, which turned out to be Napoleon's last offensive in Spain. In this conflict, a 70-man company of the 95th successfully defended the small village of Bera against an astonishing number of French. The small band of elite soldiers held out for two hours against 5,000

men, protecting the rest of the British Army as it regrouped half a mile away. The riflemen were only beaten by a desperate French cavalry charge and a lack of powder just before dawn.

A failed attack on Buenos Aires in 1807 is one of the few stand-out failures of the regiment. Losing high numbers of both officers and men, it can be speculated that the generals weren't quite sure of the best way to harness their abilities just yet. Overall though, the British Army was dominant in the war, and if it weren't for the Convention of Sintra (a signed agreement that allowed the reeling French Army to evacuate its stricken troops), then the British victory could have been even more emphatic. The riflemen of the 95th consistently displayed



■ At Roliça the British forces outnumbered the French and dominated in both rural and urban warfare, with the 95th acting as a specialist arm

KNEELED POSITION

If a rifleman caught sight of an enemy, they would crouch or kneel down to take a stable shot

UNIQUE TACTICS

Blending in with the surroundings and not looking like any other soldier on the battlefield, the 95th corps was the first of its kind. The ability to strike any enemy officer of their choice at will began to change warfare.

THE GREEN BOOK

The regiment was so well organised that it even had its own unique training manual. The Green Book advised 95th riflemen to act as the eyes and ears of the infantry and trusted them to act using the initiative gained from their extensive training.

SQUAD WARFARE

The 95th would split into squads of between four and eight men. They would occupy the flanks of the main army and avoid cavalry at all costs. Kneeling in their flanked positions, they could harass the enemy with steady, accurate shots.



THE BATTLE OF FUENTES DE OÑORO

This 1811 battle from the Peninsula War lasted three days and was an attempt by the French Empire to put an end to the British siege on the city of Almeida. 37,000 British, Portuguese and Spanish troops advanced on the fortress, but 48,000 French soldiers were determined not to let this happen. The French assault severely weakened the British ranks, but with the help of the 95th Rifles picking off targets with ease, the citadel was held as the French advance lost momentum.



their versatility on all manner of battlefields. They were universal soldiers that could undertake a variety of missions, rather than merely skirmishing. One particularly memorable advance came in their storming of the beaches in January 1812 during a ten-day siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

The 95th was the only regiment where officers carried the same firearms and engaged at the same level of warfare as the rest of the company. In an attempt to assist British troops at Talavera on their return to Portugal after the Convention, a 68-kilometre (42-mile) trek was made by the regiment. The march only took 26 hours, despite the intense Spanish heat, but unfortunately the 95th was too late to help. However, it was just in time to see the French fleeing from the victorious British Army in the distance. The 1814 Battle of Tarbes was the first time that all the 95th battalions fought in the same conflict and more French defeats resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Paris after five years of war. The 95th Rifles was undoubtedly one of the key reasons why the British triumphed, but before the dust had settled Napoleon had returned and the field at Waterloo beckoned.

When news of Napoleon's escape from exile on the island of Elba reached London, the British Army was mobilised to put the Emperor down once and for all. The reinvigorated and

new-look 95th Rifles was ready to hammer the last few nails into Napoleon's proverbial coffin. Prior to Waterloo, the regiment engaged in the Battle of Quatre Bras, where the operation didn't go quite as planned. Although a tactical draw against the Grand Armée, strategically the British were beaten and unable to relieve their Prussian allies from the French divisions. This seemed to have an affect on the 95th in particular. Accounts state that due to battle exhaustion and stress, around 30 men from the Regiment deserted their battalion. After years of fighting, this band of brothers had been torn apart at the seams. Luckily, the regiment was able to regain its composure a few days later at Waterloo. As the famous battle began, three battalions of the Rifles were positioned at the front of Wellington's ranks, so they could do the most damage. They were ably supported by the King's German Legion (made up of Hanoverians still loyal the British monarch), which defended La Haye Sainte, a walled farmhouse that was a key strategic position in the battle.

As a reward for the regiment's bravery at the Battle of Waterloo, the 95th moniker was officially removed by the Duke of Wellington, rendered largely meaningless as other newly-formed units were being disbanded. The newly formed Rifle Brigade was now an official long-term specialised corps ready to answer, whenever Britain called.

1800. FIRST LIST OF OFFICERS. 5

Colonel.
COOTE MANNINGHAM.

Lieutenant-Colonels.
THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM STEWART. ALEXANDER HOUSTON.

Majors.
GEORGE CALLANDER. HAMLET WADE.

Captains.
ROBERT TRAVERS. THOMAS SIDNEY BECKWITH.
CORNELIUS CUYLER. TIMOTHY HAMILTON.
THOMAS CHRISTOPHER GARDNER. ALEXANDER STEWART.
HENRY SHEPHERD.

Captain-Lieutenant.
ALEXANDER D. CAMERON.

First Lieutenants.
BLOIS LYNCH. JOHN ROSS.
J. A. GRANT. EDWARD BEDWELL LAW.
JOHN STUART. HENRY POWELL.
PETER O'HARE. WILLIAM COTTER.
THOMAS STIRLING EDMONSTON. JOHN CAMERON.
ROBERT DUNCAN. — DOUGLAS.
ALEXANDER CLARKE. L. H. BENNETT.
NIEL CAMPBELL.

Second Lieutenants.
HENRY GOODE. PATRICK TURNER.
JAMES MACDONALD. SAMUEL MITCHELL.
THOMAS BRERETON. GEORGE ELDER.
LOFTUS GRAY. JAMES PENDERGAST.
JOHN JENKINS. JOHN BURTON.

Paymaster.
JAMES INNES.

Adjutant.
J. A. GRANT.

Quarter Master.
DONALD MACKAY.

■ This illustration from the 1804 Manual of Rifle Drill and Firing Positions, written by Ezekiel Baker, illustrates the various shooting positions that the regiment employed



■ Right: This extract shows the accuracy of the Baker Rifle at both 100 and 200 yards





■ Along with the Baker Rifle, every rifleman was armed with a bayonet, a secondary sword and a powder horn

With kind permission of The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, Winchester.

THE MARCH TO MOSCOW

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE'S INVASION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN MILITARY HISTORY BUT IT ENDED IN FROZEN DISASTER



■ Until the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the carnage at Borodino was the worst single day's fighting in history

BATTLE OF BORODINO

The Russians were finally forced to fight at Borodino, although Napoleon could only muster 128,000 men. The battle was a pyrrhic victory for the French, and the total casualties for both sides were possibly as high as 86,000.

June 1812

CROSSING THE NIEMEN

Emperor Napoleon I's Grande Armée of 450,000-600,000 men crossed the River Niemen into Russian territory, but by September hundreds of thousands of men had already died due to the already harsh campaigning conditions.

■ As well as French troops, Napoleon commanded men of many different nationalities, including 95,000 Poles and 81,000 Germans



16-18 August 1812

BATTLE OF SMOLENSK

Napoleon attempted an ambitious manoeuvre to force the Russian Army into a pitched battle, but the result was a costly attack on the walls of Smolensk. The Russians eventually evacuated the city.

■ Napoleon before a burning Smolensk. Although the Grande Armée captured the city, the Russians were able to slip away



7 September 1812

14 September-19 October 1812

CAPTURE AND FIRE OF MOSCOW

After Borodino, Napoleon occupied Moscow but the Russians deserted and then burned their ancient capital to deny the Grande Armée shelter, supplies and a glorious victory. Morale plummeted among the emperor's troops.

■ The 'Fire of Moscow' destroyed approximately 75 percent of all properties in the city. Although the city's population had mostly departed, at least 12,000 people died in the fire



"THE BATTLE WAS A PYRRHIC VICTORY FOR THE FRENCH, AND THE TOTAL CASUALTIES FOR BOTH SIDES WERE POSSIBLY AS HIGH AS 86,000"



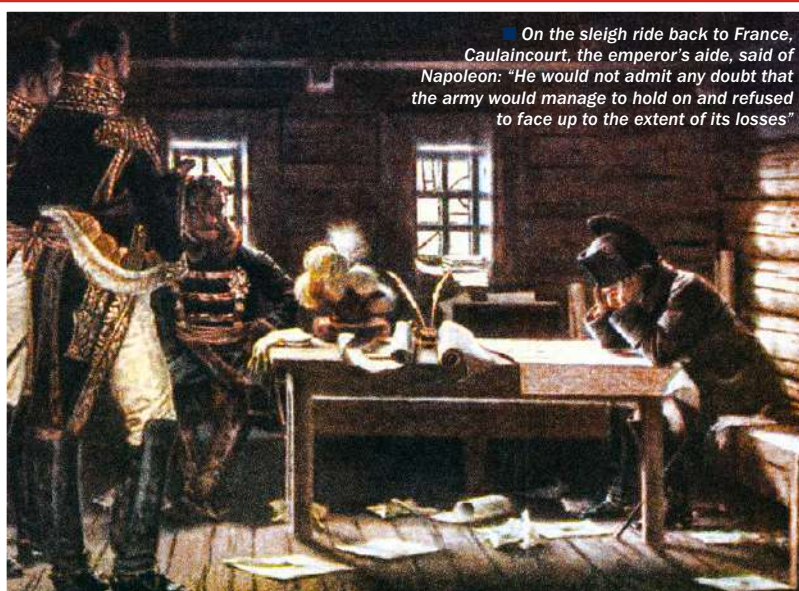
BATTLE OF BEREZINA

The remnants of the Grande Armée were almost trapped on the banks of the River Berezina but courageous work by Dutch engineers enabled thousands to cross hastily constructed pontoon bridges.

■ Although many members of the Grande Armée were able to cross the Berezina, many camp followers refused to cross the bridges and thousands were subsequently massacred by Cossacks

NAPOLEON LEAVES THE GRANDE ARMÉE

Shortly after Berezina, Napoleon left his own army to return to Paris and reassert control over central Europe by raising a new force to defeat the Russians. By now his troops were more concerned with survival than their emperor's departure.



■ On the sleigh ride back to France, Caulaincourt, the emperor's aide, said of Napoleon: "He would not admit any doubt that the army would manage to hold on and refused to face up to the extent of its losses"

October-December 1812

26-29 November 1812

5 December 1812

December 1812

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

The Grande Armée retreated from Moscow and took the road back to friendly territory via Borodino but discipline largely collapsed. Thousands notoriously died of malnutrition and the extreme cold of the Russian winter.

■ A night bivouac of the Grande Armée during the retreat from Moscow. Many of Napoleon's troops died of hypothermia and literally froze to death



■ In 2002, municipal workers discovered a mass grave of Grande Armée soldiers on the outskirts of Vilnius. In 1812, frozen corpses were reputedly piled three storeys high

ENDGAME AT VILNIUS

The pitiful remains of Napoleon's once feared force trudged into the nearest friendly outpost, which was the Lithuanian capital. However, the city could not cope with the frenzied troops. After a chaotic evacuation the Russians captured Vilnius.

PATH TO DESTRUCTION

HOW A CIVIL ENGINEER'S INGENUOUS MAP CHARTED THE GRANDE ARMÉE'S DEMISE

The French invasion of Russia formed the basis of the "best statistical graphic ever created" by civil engineer Charles Joseph Minard in 1869. The map represented the demise of Napoleon's troops using numbers, distance, locations, coordinates, direction of travel and, most significantly of all, temperature.

1 BATTLE OF SALTANOVKA

23 JULY 1812 NEAR MOGILEV, BELARUS

Saltanovka (also known as Mogilev) is the first significant fighting during the campaign. It is a minor French victory that prevents Bagration's 2nd Army from moving north to join Barclay de Tolly's 1st Army.

2 BATTLE OF BORODINO

7 SEPTEMBER 1812 BORODINO, RUSSIA

Napoleon's poor performance here denies the Grande Armée a decisive victory and is one of the bloodiest battles in history. Despite their narrow defeat, the Russian impulse to defend their homeland intensifies.



■ General Nikolay Raevsky leads his men into combat at the Battle of Saltanovka. Raevsky survives and the Russians name the main redoubt at Borodino in his honour

CAMPAIGN BEGINS JUNE 1812

THE GRANDE ARMÉE BEGINS THE CAMPAIGN WITH AROUND 550,000-600,000 SOLDIERS

Minard's original statistical drawing of the 1812 campaign revolutionised the art of infographics to create a striking map

DEATH OF THE GRANDE ARMÉE DECEMBER 1812

GRANDE ARMÉE NUMBERS FALL TO APPROXIMATELY 120,000 (ONLY 35,000 FRENCHMEN REMAIN IN THE RANKS)

■ A contemporary map of Moscow shows the extent of the damage wrought by the fire of 1812. The destroyed areas are shown in red



BATTLE OF MIR 9-10 JULY 1812 MIR, BELARUS

FIRST BATTLE OF POLOTSK 17-18 AUGUST 1812 POLOTSK, BELARUS

BATTLE OF VITEBSK 26-27 JULY 1812 VITEBSK, BELARUS

BATTLE OF OSTROVNO 25 JULY 1812 OSTROVNO, GOVERNORATE OF VITEBSK

BATTLE OF CHASHNIKI 9-10 JULY 1812 MIR, BELARUS

BATTLE OF SMOLIANI 13-14 NOVEMBER 1812 SMOLYANY, GOVERNORATE OF VITEBSK

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -30 OC 1 DECEMBER 1812

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -37 OC DECEMBER 1812

TEMPERATURE FALLS TO -26 OC 14 NOVEMBER 1812

3 OCCUPATION OF MOSCOW

14 SEPTEMBER-19 OCTOBER 1812 MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Napoleon's pyrrhic capture of the ancient Russian capital witnesses an empty city, looting and a devastating fire. The French are sent the clearest message that there will be no negotiations.

4 SECOND BATTLE OF POLOTSK

18-20 OCTOBER 1812 POLOTSK, BELARUS

The Russians defeat General Laurent Saint-Cyr at Polotsk. This action destroys Napoleon's northern flank in Belarus and helps enable three Russian armies to eventually converge on the Grande Armée at the River Berezina.



■ The Battle of Maloyaroslavets marks the irreversible military decline of the Grande Armée and sets a bad precedent for the retreat from Moscow

5 BATTLE OF MALOYAROSLAVETS

24 OCTOBER 1812 MALOYAROSLAVETS, RUSSIA

This important battle disrupts Napoleon's original plans for the retreat from Moscow. A vicious fight occurs at the town of Maloyaroslavets but the Russians are able to continue harassing the Grande Armée afterwards.

6 BATTLE OF VYAZMA

3 NOVEMBER 1812 VYAZMA, RUSSIA

Vyazma is a serious Russian attack on the retreating Grande Armée. The French are attacked half way along their overstretched line, with the greatest fighting occurring in the rearguard. 5,000 French are killed and morale plummets.

FORCE WEAKENS

6 SEPTEMBER 1812
GRANDE ARMÉE NUMBERS ARE SEVERELY
DEPLETED BEFORE BORODINO

THE GRANDE ARMÉE OCCUPIES MOSCOW

18 OCTOBER 1812
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

MOSCOW

"THE FRENCH ARE ATTACKED HALF WAY
ALONG THEIR OVERSTRETCHED LINE, WITH
THE GREATEST FIGHTING OCCURRING IN
THE REARGUARD. 5,000 FRENCH ARE
KILLED AND MORALE PLUMMETS"

BATTLE OF KYLASTITSY

28 JULY-1 AUGUST 1812
KYLASTITSY, BELARUS

DOROBOY

SMOLENSK

BATTLE OF VALUNTINO

18 AUGUST 1812
NR SMOLENSK, RUSSIA

BATTLE OF SMOLENSK

16-18 AUGUST 1812
SMOLENSK, RUSSIA

ORSCHA

DNIEPER
RIVER

MOHILOW

WIRMA

MALOYAROSLAVETS

BATTLE OF TARUNTINO

31 OCTOBER 1812
CHASHNIKI, BELARUS

7 BATTLE OF KRASNOI

15-18 NOVEMBER 1812 KRASNOY, RUSSIA

Kutuzov claims a great victory as the French suffer heavier losses than the Russians. Although the French manage to escape, Krasnoi continues the slow destruction of the Grande Armée.

■ The courageous retreat of
Marshal Ney's rearguard at
Krasnoi. 'General Winter' is an
arguably more deadly enemy
than the Russians



TEMPERATURE
FALLS TO -11 °C
9 NOVEMBER 1812

8 BATTLE OF BEREZINA

26-29 NOVEMBER 1812 BEREZINA RIVER, BARYSAW, BELARUS

Trapped by Russian armies on the Berezina River, this battle is the last 'success' of the Grande Armée during 1812. Its remnants manage to escape across hastily constructed pontoon bridges and continue marching west to relative safety.



-13 °C
-25 °C
-37 °C

TEMPERATURE

■ Polish
lancers play
a key role in
Napoleon's
Russian
campaign
Images: Alamy

KEY BATTLE BEREZINA

NAPOLEON'S RETREAT HAD BECOME DESPERATE AS ONE POTENTIAL ESCAPE ROUTE AFTER ANOTHER WAS CLOSED. BY MID-NOVEMBER, THERE WAS JUST ONE CHANCE TO REACH POLAND – BY CROSSING THE BEREZINA RIVER AT BORISOV

The savagely cold weather that had been plaguing the retreat ought now to have worked in favour of the exhausted French. The Berezina would normally be frozen that late in the year, which would make crossing easier. An unexpected thaw, however, scotched that possibility, leaving the bridge at Borisov as the sole remaining option.

The bridge was held by a small French corps commanded by General Dombrowski, but on 21 November they were driven away by superior Russian forces under Admiral Chichagov, who then crossed the bridge to the east side of the river. With General Wittgenstein closing in with another Russian army, and Marshal Kutuzov also expected to arrive soon, the situation for Napoleon was dire. Two days later, Chichagov

was forced back over the Berezina, but was able to destroy the bridge as he withdrew, apparently trapping the French army on the east side of the river as superior Russian forces closed in.

By luck, the French then discovered a ford where the army's engineers might be able quickly to throw up a bridge. The trick would be distracting the Russians while the bridge was built. In order to pull this off, Napoleon staged a number of diversions to the south. Chichagov took the bait and moved most of his men to cover the suspected French crossing, allowing French engineers to throw up two bridges, one for infantry and one for artillery.

Despite the desperate nature of the situation, the crossings were thoroughly planned, with army units scheduled to go over during the day

and civilians (of which there were thousands) at night. The infantry bridge, completed by 1pm on 26 November, was weak, but enabled the first Frenchmen to cross and form a bridgehead. Marshal Oudinot, with the French II Corps, then pushed south to drive Chichagov further away. That night, III Corps, under Marshal Ney, crossed, with the Polish V Corps following.

Artillery had also started to cross the sturdier second bridge around 3pm that afternoon, but the bridge collapsed five hours later and had to be rebuilt; in the freezing conditions, the engineers of General Eblé's corps suffered horribly as they hurried to fix the only escape.

The following day, more units made it across the river, although the army stragglers and civilians proved unwilling to cross under cover

■ The remnants of Napoleon's army cross the Berezina on two hastily constructed bridges

"THE BATTLE OF BEREZINA HAD COST NAPOLEON SOMETHING LIKE 20-30,000 MEN, WHILE ANOTHER 20,000 STRAGGLERS AND CIVILIANS HAD ALSO PERISHED"



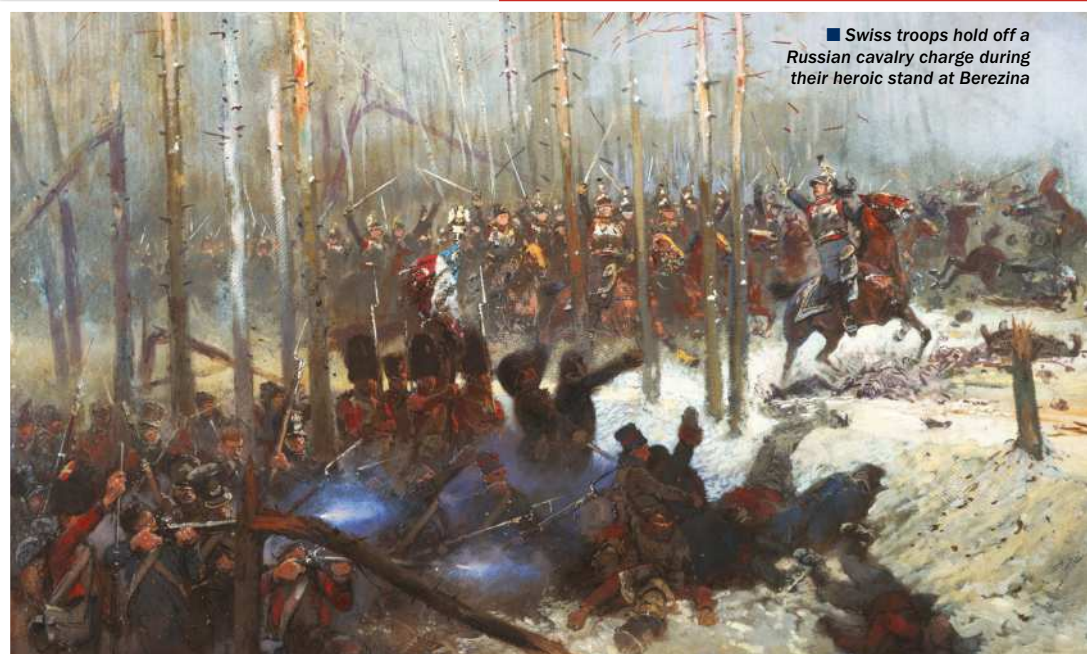
■ Wittgenstein's failure to co-ordinate his actions with Chichagov may have prevented the Russians from attaining a complete victory

of darkness, preferring to wait on the east bank. As events played out, they would wait there until it was too late to cross.

By 28 November, the Russians were ready to intervene, with the hope of completely smashing the remnants of Napoleon's Grand Armée. Chichagov advanced against the bulk of the army on the western side of the river while Wittgenstein tackled the rearguard, commanded by Marshal Claude Victor-Perrin, on the east. Launching 25,000 of his men against around 19,000 French, Chichagov appeared to be on the verge of success when a charge by Polish lancers and French cuirassiers stopped the Russians' momentum and let the French hold out till nightfall.

Strangely, Wittgenstein employed only a fraction of his men in his attack on the east bank – around 14,000 out of 45,000. Despite this, the situation was so grim that Napoleon actually sent a division back across the Berezina. With the fighting desperate, the rearguard held firm, but Russian artillery sparked a panic among the army stragglers, who stampeded and caused the artillery bridge to collapse again.

At around 7pm on the evening of 28 November, the last units were ordered to cross the river and then burn the bridges in order to halt the Russians' pursuit. Tragically, the panicked civilians could still not be convinced to cross, and only tried to do so when the bridges had been set on fire, resulting in thousands of needless deaths.



■ Swiss troops hold off a Russian cavalry charge during their heroic stand at Berezina

The Battle of Berezina had cost Napoleon something like 20-30,000 men, while another 20,000 stragglers and civilians had also perished. It would normally have been considered a terrible defeat, but by getting a remnant of the Grand Armée across the river, he had at least preserved a foundation stone upon which a new army could be built.

THE SWISS STAND FIRM

Many nationalities fought for Napoleon during the Russian campaign, but none with more courage than the Swiss infantry showed at Berezina

The Swiss that fought under the French colours at Berezina played a key role in allowing the army to cross the river. They had suffered greatly during the Russian campaign, with around 6,700 of the original 8,000 already lost before the bedraggled army reached the Berezina.

As part of the French II Corps they then had to hold back Chichagov's army to give the bulk of the French forces time to cross the river. Often having to resort to bayonet charges in order to keep the Russians at bay, and with ammunition in scarce supply, the Swiss somehow held the left flank of the French position. Repeatedly driven back, they managed to respond each time, but at a terrible cost. Only 300 Swiss troops survived the battle.

Adding insult to injury, in the chaos of the retreat records were lost and most of the 1,000 or so men who died holding back Chichagov's army were simply classed as disappeared, rather than officially dead. As late as 30 years after the battle, requests were still being made for information on the fate of soldiers involved in the savage action. Little wonder, then, that 'Berezina' became adopted by French-speakers as a synonym for 'disaster'.

“REPEATEDLY DRIVEN BACK, THEY MANAGED TO RESPOND EACH TIME, BUT AT A TERRIBLE COST. ONLY 300 SWISS TROOPS SURVIVED THE BATTLE”



IN THE RANKS

IN SOME OF THE MOST BRUTAL CONDITIONS EXPERIENCED DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, THE COMMON SOLDIER WAS PUSHED TO THE LIMIT

The invasion of Russia was a truly massive logistical exercise, and in order to gather an army large enough for the monumental task Napoleon had to cast his net across much of Europe. Russia responded by drawing manpower from its own massive population, which was double that of France.

1ST POLISH LIGHT CAVALRY REGIMENT OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD

POLAND'S TROUBLED HISTORY HAD SEEN ITS BORDERS CONTRACT, EXPAND AND EVEN DISAPPEAR, BUT ITS FIGHTING MEN WERE ALWAYS IN DEMAND

Poles served in many armies of the Napoleonic Wars, with the eye-catching lancers grabbing most of the plaudits. The ancient lance had largely disappeared from the battlefield over the centuries, but Polish 'Uhlans' had kept faith with the elegant weapon and their performance across Europe convinced many to reintroduce their own lancer regiments.

The 1st Polish Light Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard was formed on 9 April 1807, by order of Napoleon himself. The regiment had a paper strength of 776 troops in eight companies, but this was to increase

steadily. Horses were stipulated to be no more than four feet nine inches in height, which today would qualify them as ponies rather than horses.

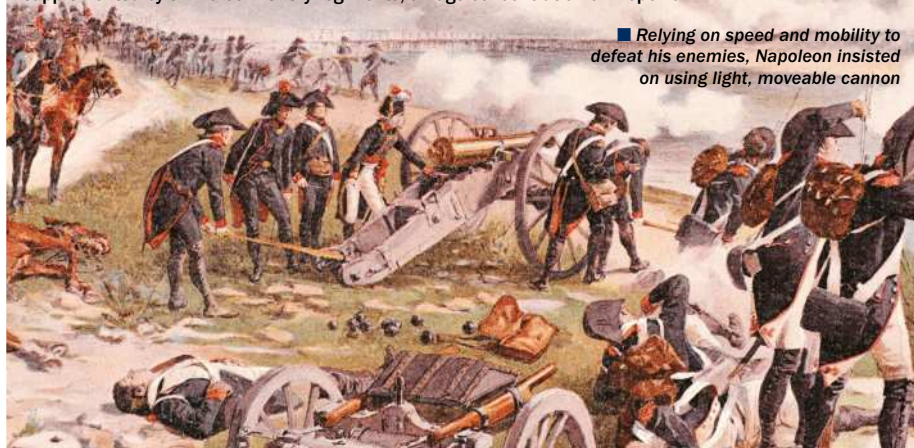
The regiment was originally armed with sabres, but in 1809 lances were adopted with the help of training from the 1st Regiment of Lancers of the Vistula (another Polish unit). The lance was 2.75 metres long and was topped with a crimson and white pennon. The regiment served with distinction during the Moscow campaign but suffered horrendous losses. By the end of the campaign it was worn down to less than half of its original strength.

FRENCH ARTILLERYMAN

The most revered branch of the service, the artillery attracted the brightest minds thanks to its devotion to mathematics and science

As a former artillery officer, Napoleon always had a special affection for his guns, and his use of them on the offensive (gathered together in massed batteries) was often devastating. The ratio of guns to infantry increased steadily during the war to compensate for the enlistment of inferior soldiers, with the number of companies per artillery regiment expanding from 20 to 28. By 1812, nine regiments of Foot Artillery were supplemented by six Horse Artillery regiments, a huge concentration of firepower.

■ Relying on speed and mobility to defeat his enemies, Napoleon insisted on using light, moveable cannon



DON COSSACK

UNPREDICTABLE AND TEMPERAMENTAL, COSSACKS RAILED AGAINST AUTHORITY, BUT PROVIDED SOME OF THE BEST LIGHT CAVALRY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

One of the most infamous names in military history, 'Cossack' covers a wide range of peoples, known as 'hosts', who forged their formidable reputation in border fighting with Tartar warriors. The Don Cossacks were the predominant faction in the Russian Imperial Army, best suited to reconnaissance and scouting but deadly when unleashed to harry a defeated foe. Fiercely independent (their name is a corruption of the Turkic word for 'freeman') they were usually armed with a sword ('shashka') and a long spear.

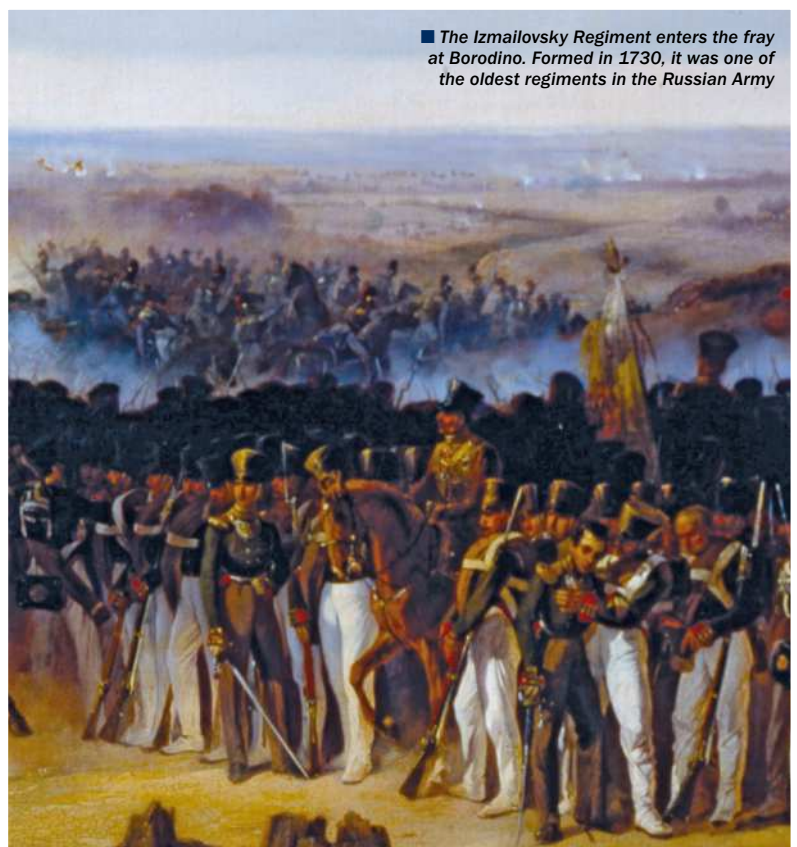
"THE DON COSSACKS WERE THE PREDOMINANT FACTION IN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL ARMY, BEST SUITED TO RECONNAISSANCE AND SCOUTING BUT DEADLY WHEN UNLEASHED TO HARRY A DEFEATED FOE"

RUSSIAN IMPERIAL GUARDSMAN

With their aristocratic officers and selected men, the Russian Guards were recognised as the finest-looking troops in Europe

Originally formed in the 1690s and recognised as the elite of the Russian Army, the 'Leib Guard' numbered six infantry regiments in 1812, organised into three brigades. The quality of the men was such that impressive NCOs could find themselves elevated to the officer ranks in a regular regiment. At Borodino they formed the V (Guard) Infantry Corps, which included an artillery brigade and a Cuirassier division. The corps performed with such distinction it was awarded the St. George's Colour.

■ The Izmailovsky Regiment enters the fray at Borodino. Formed in 1730, it was one of the oldest regiments in the Russian Army



HEROES & COMMANDERS

THE FRENCH INVASION OF RUSSIA ULTIMATELY REVEALED SIGNIFICANT FLAWS IN THE RESPECTIVE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, BUT ALSO GREAT VIRTUES IN THEIR SUBORDINATES

PYOTR BAGRATION THE AGGRESSIVE GEORGIAN PRINCE YEARS: 1765-1812 COUNTRY: RUSSIA

A member of the Georgian royal family, Prince Bagration joined the Russian army in 1782 and was the subordinate commander to Generalissimo Alexander Suvorov during the Italian and Swiss expeditions of 1799-1800. He gained further experience fighting at the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz, Eylau and Friedland. Bagration's relationship with Tsar Alexander I was strained but in 1812, he was appointed to command Russia's 2nd Army.

The prince vigorously advocated fighting the Grande Armée in open battle but this clashed with Barclay de Tolly's policy of making the French march deeper into Russian territory. Bagration's frustration led him to actively campaign to remove Barclay from command but he also won victories on the retreat towards Moscow. After fighting the Grande Armée to a draw at the Battle of Mogilev and a failed counterattack at Smolensk, Bagration commanded the left wing at the Battle of Borodino where he was mortally wounded and eventually died of an infected wound on 24 September 1812.

■ Despite being popular among his troops and a talented battlefield commander, Bagration lacked strategic grasp and his animosity towards Barclay de Tolly was arguably misguided

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE

THE OVERAMBITIOUS BUT LACKLUSTRE EMPEROR YEARS: 1769-1821 COUNTRY: FRANCE

At the beginning of 1812 Napoleon, the former Corsican artilleryman, was at the peak of his powers. He had become emperor of the French and the 'Master of Europe' through a series of brilliant victories and campaigns including the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805 where he defeated the Austrians and Russians. Among the losers of this battle were Mikhail Kutuzov and Tsar Alexander I himself, so for the next seven years Napoleon believed he could bend the Russians to his will. He was gravely mistaken and when Alexander refused to blockade Britain along with Napoleonic Europe, the emperor arguably made his first strategic mistake by letting his pride overrule sense and he invaded Russia.

Unlike his previous campaigns, Napoleon made continual mistakes in Russia that cost him and his huge army dear. By taking the bait of following Barclay de Tolly's, and then Kutuzov's, army deeper into Russian territory, his own supply lines became dangerously overstretched. At Borodino, one of the bloodiest battles in history, the emperor was in uncharacteristically bad form and spent most of the day sitting in a chair looking through a telescope. A staff officer observed, "We were all surprised not to see the active man of Marengo, Austerlitz etc. We did not feel satisfied; our judgements were severe."

Following the Pyrrhic victory, Napoleon captured Moscow but was then humiliated when he saw it burned by its own inhabitants, denying him supplies and glory. Now losing the initiative he would not give up having an "extraordinary blind faith in his own star" but Moscow had to be abandoned

and the subsequent retreat was a disaster. Even the emperor was forced to exchange his famous bicorne hat in favour of Polish winter clothing but he occasionally showed flashes of his old genius, particularly at the Berezina. However, Napoleon eventually abandoned his own army to die and took a fast sleigh back to Paris, blaming everyone but himself for the disaster.

■ Napoleon near Borodino. The emperor seemed distracted while the battle raged nearby, prompting several to observe that this was not the dynamic man who had made Europe tremble





Kutuzov lost an eye in combat in 1774 and was known for his drinking and womanising but he was also cunning and knowledgeable

MIKHAIL KUT

THE SLUGGISH VICTOR OF 1812 YEARS: 1745-1813 COUNTRY: RUSSIA

Kutuzov became an artilleryman at the age of 14 and saw extensive action in campaigns against Turkey. After some time as a diplomat he commanded 55,000 troops in 1805 but he was made a scapegoat by Tsar Alexander I for the disastrous coalition defeat at Austerlitz. However by 1812 the situation was so grave that Alexander belatedly appointed him as commander-in-chief of the Russian forces to replace Barclay de Tolly.

Despite replacing Barclay, Kutuzov largely adopted his strategy of retreating towards Moscow while simultaneously harassing the Grande Armée with minor battles. However, at Borodino Kutuzov faced his first big test and he was found wanting. The direction of the battle often fell to his subordinates and at one point Kutuzov was found picnicking with officers behind the lines. However he cunningly abandoned Moscow and then harassed the retreating Grande Armée before inflicting a defeat on them at the Battle of Maloyaroslavets. By 1813 Kutuzov had entered Poland and Prussia.

MICHEL NEY

"THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE" YEARS: 1769-1815 COUNTRY: FRANCE

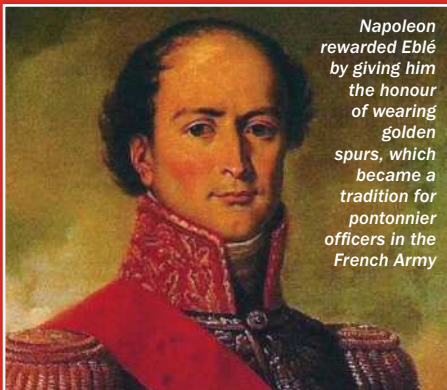
Arguably the most courageous of Napoleon's marshals, Ney was the son of a cooper but he enlisted in the French army as a hussar in 1787 and by 1796 he was a general. Initially a republican, Ney became a loyal supporter of Napoleon and in 1804 he was made a marshal of France and fought across Europe. In 1812 Ney was given command of III Corps and he especially distinguished himself during the infamous retreat.

III Corps mostly formed the rearguard of the retreat and at one point Ney's men became cut off from the main force. Despite a desperate fight and a rush across the River Dnieper, Ney managed to extricate himself with 800 men. At the Berezina he held off the Russians for a whole day and remained with the rearguard until the end of the campaign. Napoleon subsequently dubbed him the "bravest of the brave."

"AT THE BEREZINA HE HELD OFF THE RUSSIANS FOR A WHOLE DAY AND REMAINED WITH THE REARGUARD UNTIL THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN"



Ney was reputedly the last Frenchman to leave Russia and fired a defiant last shot back across the River Niemen



Napoleon rewarded Eblé by giving him the honour of wearing golden spurs, which became a tradition for pontonnier officers in the French Army

JEAN BAPTISTE EBLÉ

THE SAVIOUR OF THE GRANDE ARMÉE YEARS: 1758-1812 COUNTRY: FRANCE

Eblé joined the French Army in 1793 as an artilleryman and quickly became a general the following year. In 1812 his specific orders were to command engineers, which included 400 Dutch soldiers who were experts when it came to constructing pontoon bridges.

In November 1812 the beleaguered Grande Armée reached the banks of the icy Berezina but the Russians blocked their way. Napoleon had ordered that all of the bridging train be destroyed but Eblé disobeyed and saved some equipment. A ford was

discovered and the pontonniers started to build three new bridges.

Eblé led by example and worked tirelessly in freezing water to successfully construct the bridges. The remnants of the army were able to continue retreating but many exhausted camp followers refused to cross the bridges, despite Eblé's attempts to convince them. Eblé was promoted to commander-in-chief of the artillery but his exertions hastened his early death by the end of the year.

Images: Alamy

MICHAEL ANDREAS BARCLAY DE TOLLY

THE UNDERRATED RUSSIAN COMMANDER YEARS: 1761-1818 COUNTRY: RUSSIA

Born into a German-speaking family of Scottish descent in what is now Lithuania, Barclay de Tolly was something of an outsider among the Russian nobility. Nevertheless he spent almost his entire life in the Russian army, having enlisted aged only nine. By 1812 he was minister of war and a favourite of Tsar Alexander I who appointed him the commander of Russia's 1st Army and effective commander-in-chief, in direct opposition to Napoleon.

Barclay's main contribution to the 1812 campaign was pursuing a policy of avoiding

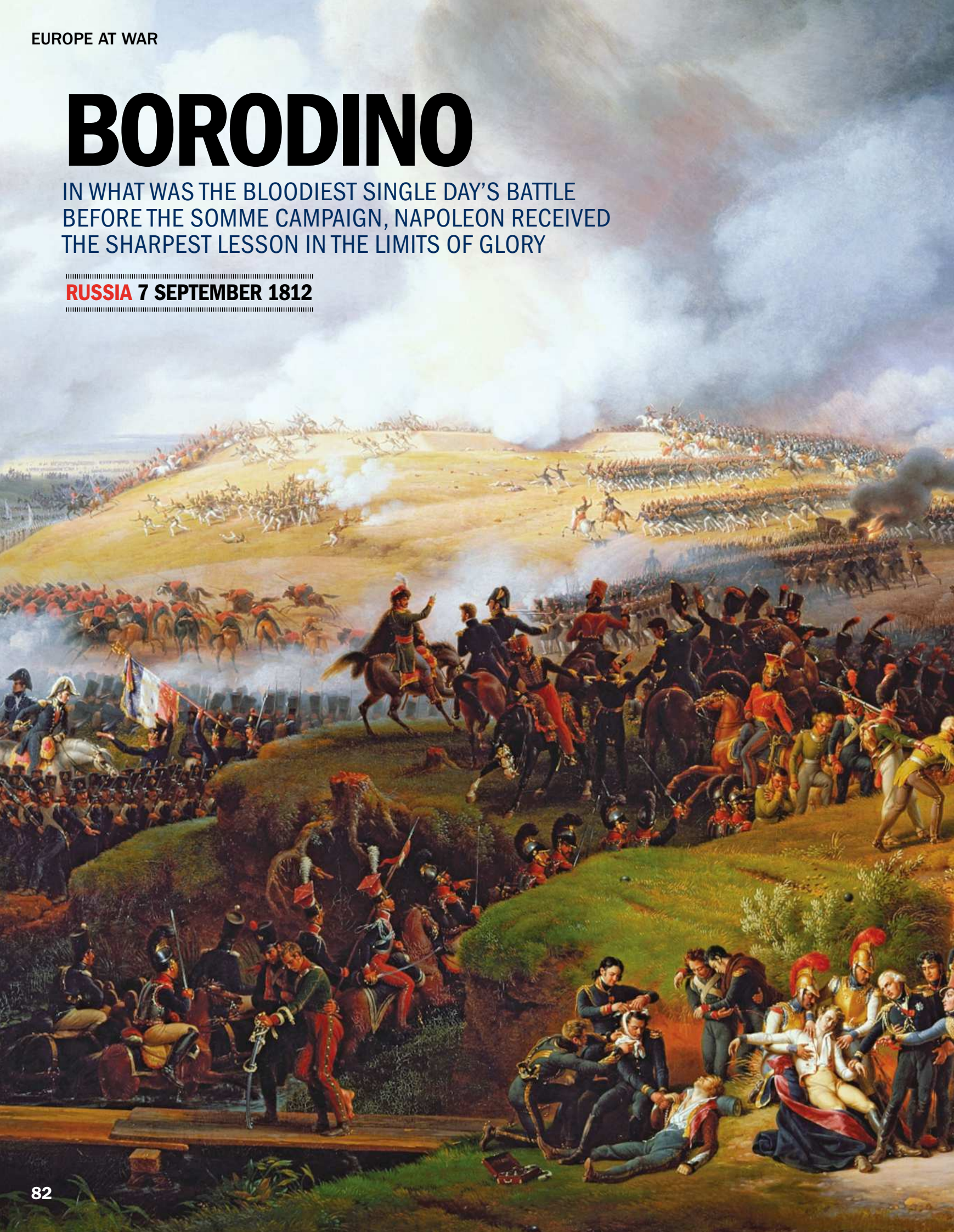
pitched battles in favour of gaining time and retreating further and further into Russia to stretch the logistical capabilities of the Grande Armée to breaking point. This strategy initially proved highly unpopular among other senior officers in the Russian forces and Mikhail Kutuzov replaced Barclay. However, he still retained command of 1st Army and led the right wing at Borodino where he performed well. Despite retiring from the army soon afterwards on grounds of ill-health, Barclay's strategy ultimately bore fruit and he was subsequently proclaimed a hero.



BORODINO

IN WHAT WAS THE BLOODIEST SINGLE DAY'S BATTLE
BEFORE THE SOMME CAMPAIGN, NAPOLEON RECEIVED
THE SHARPEST LESSON IN THE LIMITS OF GLORY

RUSSIA 7 SEPTEMBER 1812





■ This scene of the battle was painted by a French staff officer called Louis Lejeune who fought on the day. He was scathing of Napoleon's conduct at Borodino



n 28 October 1812, the dispirited Grande Armée passed through the village of Borodino during a humiliating retreat from Moscow. Here their morale reached new lows, for this was the site of an exceptionally

bloody battle that they had fought nearly two months previously. The battlefield had not yet been cleared of its dead and the corpses had been partially eaten by animals. An eyewitness, Adrien de Mailly, described the sight as, "... some grotesque travesty making fun of misery and death – it was odious!" The gruesome scene was symbolic of one of the most hideous battles in history.

Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Russia in 1812 was an exceptionally dramatic campaign that would decide the fate of Russia and Napoleonic Europe. It is famous for the retreat from Moscow, where the Grande Armée was reduced to a husk of its former self when thousands of soldiers froze to death during the infamous Russian winter. Nonetheless, the army had suffered catastrophe even before it reached Moscow – on the battlefield of Borodino. This mighty clash, which was immortalised in Leo Tolstoy's novel *War And Peace* and Pyotr Tchaikovsky's musical piece the 1812 Overture, is perhaps the most pyrrhic of all victories and it marked the beginning of Napoleon's decline.

THE MASTER OF EUROPE

The road to Borodino lies in the strained diplomacy following French successes. Napoleon fought the Russians to the negotiating table following their heavy defeat at Friedland in 1807. At the Treaty of Tilsit in June 1807, he imposed his will on both the king of Prussia and Tsar Alexander I. The Russians had to accept French hegemony in central Europe and surrender their Mediterranean possessions, but most importantly they had to join the "Continental System", Napoleon's blockade of Britain that banned the import of British goods into European countries that were allied to or dependent on France. His plan was to commercially squeeze Britain into submission, but in the process Russia was highly provoked. Trade with Britain was important to the Russian economy, so in 1810 the Tsar resumed trading with the British.

Relations between France and Russia steadily deteriorated with Napoleon coming to believe that Alexander was preparing to make war. Although this was not in fact the case, the slide to conflict was irreversible as the two proud monarchs became increasingly frustrated with the other's intentions. Eventually Napoleon's pride got the better of him and in early 1812 he amassed a huge army that he intended to march into Russia in order to re-impose his will on Alexander. Napoleon was taking a huge gamble in provoking a largely unnecessary war with Russia and the resulting campaign would have huge consequences for all concerned.

For the invasion, Napoleon put together one of the largest forces in history. The "Grande Armée" ("Great Army") numbered between

450,000-600,000 men and was gathered from all parts of Europe. The majority of the troops were French but there were large contingents from all over France's new domains, including 95,000 Poles and 81,000 Germans. The reason for its enormous size was that after his study of Charles XII of Sweden's failed invasion of Russia in 1709, Napoleon concluded that he needed at least 500,000 men and a huge stockpile of supplies for a successful campaign. Despite this, he couldn't control this many men in a single force, and the army split into three for the advance into Russia. Each would be many miles apart with Napoleon commanding the central force.

In late June 1812, French forces crossed the River Niemen into Russian territory and the invasion began. Facing them was a Russian army of approximately 409,000 regulars, with 211,000 in the front lines. Unlike the Grande Armée, the Russians had no legendary figurehead to rally around, and their leaders frequently quarrelled and contradicted one another. Initially the Russians were commanded by the minister of war, Barclay de Tolly, who was competent but unfairly mistrusted by his peers for being a 'foreigner' (he had distant Scottish-German ancestry). Other key players were the popular Georgian Prince Pyotr Bagration and the veteran Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, who was highly experienced but dangerously sluggish. All three would play critical roles in the battle to come.

A CHAOTIC CAMPAIGN

The campaign started to go wrong immediately for Napoleon. Advancing from Vitebsk, he

hoped to catch the Russian army in the open, but it kept retreating while the Grande Armée marched hundreds of miles away from its nearest supply base at Kovno. The French supply lines became overstretched, wreaking havoc among Napoleon's troops. The central force under the emperor's direct command had numbered 286,000 men when it crossed the Niemen in June, but by September, the harsh rigours of the campaign had reduced that number to just over 161,000 men. These huge losses did not bode well for the future.

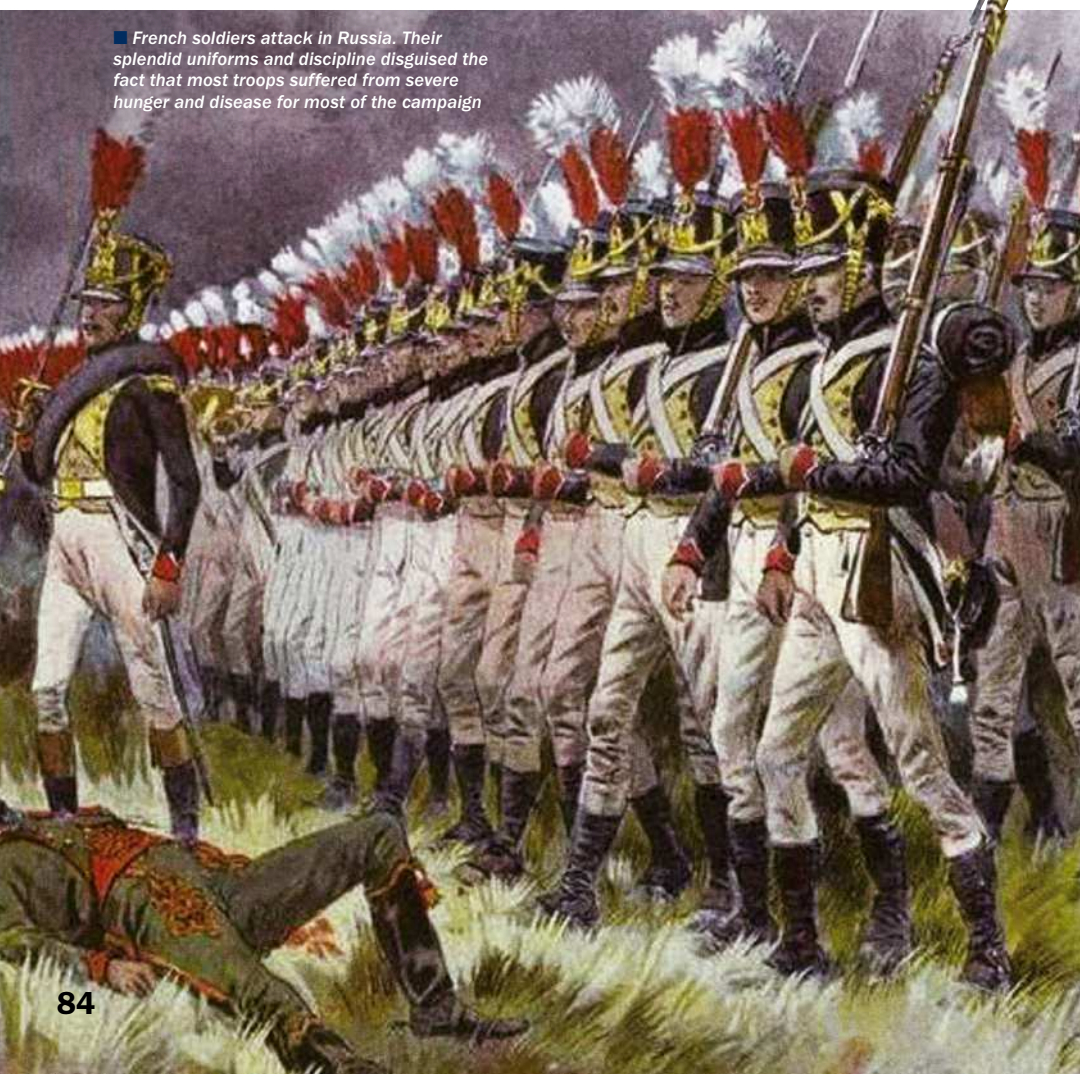
Nevertheless, Napoleon did catch up with the Russians 68 miles west of Moscow, near to the village of Borodino, in September. From the Russian perspective this was reluctantly intentional. It was clear that Napoleon was aiming for Moscow in order to enforce his will on Tsar Alexander, who was ensconced at St Petersburg. The Russians had adopted a scorched-earth policy to deprive the Grande Armée of supplies, but now political pressure was forcing them to make a stand against the "Corsican Ogre". Consequently, the Russian army halted at Borodino and constructed hastily-built earthworks known as fleches, which would help the artillery bombard the Grande Armée.

The Russians built three fleches, each between 1.5 and 2 metres tall and of varying shapes – two had four sides, while another was shaped like an arrowhead. However, these defences were small compared with the Great Redoubt in the centre of the Russian line. Facing towards the west, this had 72-metre-long shoulders that met in the middle at a 100-degree angle, was protected

OPPOSING FORCES	
	
GRAND ARMÉE	IMPERIAL RUSSIAN ARMY
LEADER Emperor Napoleon I	LEADERS Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov
TROOPS 128,000-134,000	TROOPS 154,000-157,000
CANNON 584	CANNON 640

by a ditch with extra pits to stop horses, and had 18-24 cannon. As the battlefield was relatively small, consisting of small hills, brooks and the River Kalatsha, these earthworks would prove decisive. The village of Borodino itself sat on the north bank of the Kalatsha, to the east was Gorki and Utitsa was on the southern flank. In the centre was Semeonovskoie, positioned on a hill between the Great Redoubt and the fleches – although its wooden buildings were dismantled before the battle.

These fortifications gave a false sense that the Russians were well prepared, but in reality their leadership was in complete disarray. De Tolly had recently been demoted by Kutuzov and Bagration was left dissatisfied with both of his superiors. Kutuzov, although highly experienced and popular with his troops, was almost 67 years old and incapable of confident decision-making in the field. He commanded between



French soldiers attack in Russia. Their splendid uniforms and discipline disguised the fact that most troops suffered from severe hunger and disease for most of the campaign



154,000-157,000 troops but it was unclear how they would perform in the field against the Grande Armée.

Napoleon's troops themselves were in a bad condition. At a roll call at Gzhatsk on 2 September, only 128,000 men answered the muster. There were about 6,000 straggling troops who would be able to catch up but this meant there were only 134,000 men prepared for battle. A French grenadier remembered the underfed troops in his army, "If General Kutuzov had been able to put off battle for several days, there is no doubt he would have vanquished us without a fight. The enemy was a vicious hunger which was destroying us."

There were similar sentiments on the night before the battle on 6-7 September. Lieutenant Heinrich Vossler recalled, "...a miserable plate of bread soup oiled with the stump of a tallow candle was all I had to eat on the eve of the big battle. But in my famished condition even this revolting dish seemed quite appetising." Many like Colonel Boulart, simply felt despair: "If we are beaten, what terrible risks will we not run! Can a single one of us expect to return to his native country?" Even Napoleon remarked to one of his generals that his army was in bad shape when he said: "poor army, it is much reduced." By contrast, the better-fed Russians were looking forward to the fighting, like Lieutenant Nikolai Mitarevsky: "I was eager to take part in a great battle, to experience all the feelings of being in one, and to be able to say afterwards that I had been in such a battle."

To boost morale, Napoleon issued a proclamation that stated: "Soldiers! This is the battle you have looked forward to so much! Now victory depends on you: we need it.

THE GRANDE ARMÉE: AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE

The huge invading force was a melting pot of nationalities, making the 1812 campaign a truly continental war

The Grande Armée is traditionally seen as being an exclusive French force, but in reality it was cosmopolitan and represented all the European nations that were either occupied by, or allied to, Napoleon's empire. Consequently, although the majority of troops were French, it also contained soldiers from the German states, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Italian peninsula, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Croatia. All nationalities were commanded by French generals and imbued with French military culture, with the exception of the Poles, Austrians and Prussians.

The Poles were the largest non-French contingent, numbering 95,000 men, and were enthusiastic allies against the Russians. There were also 81,000 Germans, who were split in their loyalties. None had much love for the French, but the Germans who came from Napoleon's enforced 'Confederation of the Rhine' were mostly antagonistic towards the 20,000 serving Prussians, but all were keen to roll the Russians out of Europe.

Many of the non-French contingents came from occupied territories and resented being part of the army. Lieutenant von Wedel wrote: "There were many who, in their heart of hearts, wished the Russians success." However he also conceded the power of Napoleon's presence, "Whatever their personal feelings may have been there was nobody who did not see in him the greatest and most able of all generals. The aura of his greatness subjugated me as well and I, like the others, shouted, 'Vive l'Empereur!'"



■ Right: Soldiers of the 1st Light Polish Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard. At Borodino this regiment was kept in reserve, but 95,000 Poles served in the Grande Armée

■ Russian Cossack cavalry during the French invasion. A Russian cavalry charge at Borodino distracted Napoleon and halted his deployment of the Imperial Guard, which influenced the outcome of the battle



■ Napoleon near Borodino. The emperor sat in a chair and seemed distracted for most of the day while the battle raged in the near distance. This was not the dynamic general who had caused Europe to tremble



Conduct yourselves as you did at Austerlitz... and may the most distant generations cite your conduct on this day with pride. Let it be said of you: 'He was at this great battle under the walls of Moscow!'" Kutuzov, for his part, issued a more earthy statement. "Boys, today it will fall on you to defend your native land; you must serve faithfully and truly to the last drop of blood. I am counting on you. God will help us! Say your prayers!"

AN ERUPTION OF DEATH

At 6am on 7 September, the French cannon opened up and the Russians immediately answered. Across the compact battlefield, over 1,000 guns were firing in a cannonade that would last all day. The French *grande batterie* pounded the *fleches*, which threw up swirling dust that mixed with smoke to create a confusing atmosphere with limited visibility. Despite this murderous exchange of fire, Napoleon's stepson Prince Eugène, on the Grande Armée's left flank, advanced with his division of French-Croat infantry, who swept the Russians out of Borodino village before occupying it. Two more of Eugène's divisions managed to cross the River Kolocha but were pushed back.

To the south, Marshal Davout launched two divisions against the *fleches* after a half-hour artillery bombardment, and two were taken after fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The defenders here lost 3,700 out of 4,000 men in the space of two hours. Tragically, the *fleches* became death traps for the new occupiers, who found their backs to the walls of the defences and vulnerable to Russian counterattacks. Over the next three hours, the *fleches* were stormed, captured and retaken several times as both sides threw in reinforcements. There were 70,000 men fighting for the *fleches* and the engagements became so intense that bayonets were used instead of muskets. General Jean Rapp recalled: "I had never seen such carnage."

Thousands were left dead among the *fleches* as attacks and counterattacks ebbed and flowed. At around 10am, Bagration was mortally wounded in the leg while rallying his troops and shortly afterwards the French cleared the *fleches*. Nonetheless, the Russians did not give up easily, as Captain Lubenkov later recalled: "It was a fight between ferocious tigers, not men. Once both sides had determined to win or die where they stood, they did not stop fighting when their muskets broke, but carried on, using butts and swords in terrible hand-to-hand combat."

The village of Semeonovskoie was now in French hands, and Marshals Ney and Murat demanded reinforcements to secure victory, but Napoleon was unresponsive. He was in uncharacteristically bad form, and for most of the day sat in a chair observing the battlefield from a distance. The smoke and dust clouds obscured his view and instead of riding closer to observe events, he silently dismissed reporting officers and stuck to viewing progress through a telescope. This conduct did not impress his subordinates, including a staff officer called Louis Lejeune who noted in his diary: "We were all surprised not to see the

01 BOMBARDMENT BEGINS

At 6am, the French artillery opens fire and the Russians respond with over 1,000 cannon. The battlefield's compact size means most men can observe the action. The French guns pound the Russian earthworks, creating huge dust clouds, and the Redoubt fires back.

02 THE FRENCH ADVANCE

Prince Eugène's division loses half its men occupying the village of Borodino, but also pushes back the Russian infantry over the River Kolocha. Meanwhile, Marshal Davout launches two divisions against the southern *fleches*, and Marshal Poniatowski pushes back Tuchkov's division and occupies the village of Utitsa.

03 THE RUSSIANS FIGHTS BACK

The Russians counterattack to expel the French away from the southern *fleches* led by Prince Vorontsov, but the French retaliate in a fierce assault that retakes the *fleches*. By 8am, Vorontsov is wounded, with his division losing 3,700 men out of 4,000 in two hours.

04 BLOODY ASSAULTS ON THE FLECHES

The *fleches* are repeatedly attacked by the French for three hours, and are captured and retaken several times. Kutuzov sends 30,000 Russians and 300 guns to defend the *fleches*. The French devote 40,000 men and more than 200 guns to the attacks. Thousands are killed, with the bayonet becoming the principal weapon.

05 BAGRATION IS MORTALLY WOUNDED

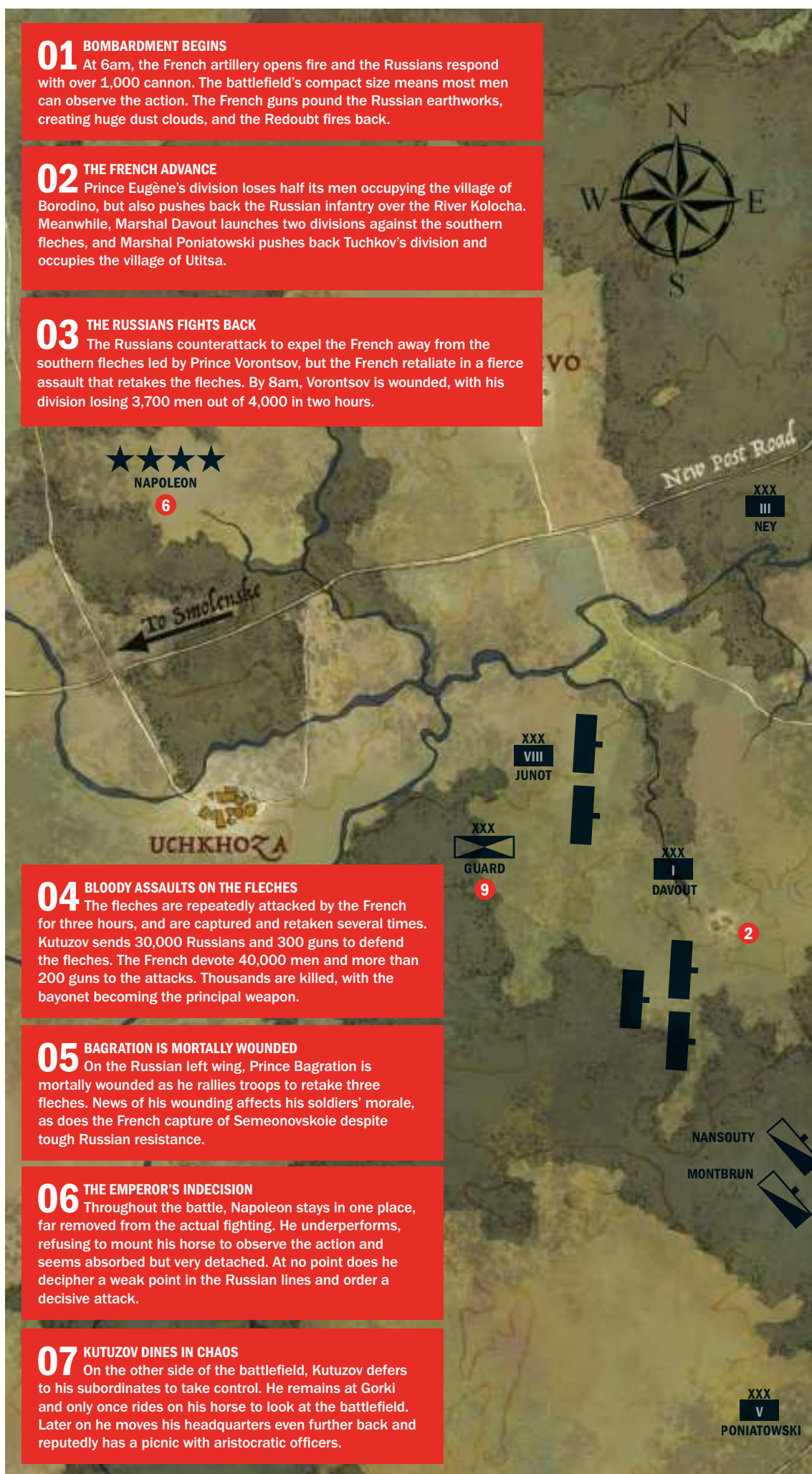
On the Russian left wing, Prince Bagration is mortally wounded as he rallies troops to retake three *fleches*. News of his wounding affects his soldiers' morale, as does the French capture of Semeonovskoie despite tough Russian resistance.

06 THE EMPEROR'S INDECISION

Throughout the battle, Napoleon stays in one place, far removed from the actual fighting. He underperforms, refusing to mount his horse to observe the action and seems absorbed but very detached. At no point does he decipher a weak point in the Russian lines and order a decisive attack.

07 KUTUZOV DINES IN CHAOS

On the other side of the battlefield, Kutuzov defers to his subordinates to take control. He remains at Gorki and only once rides on his horse to look at the battlefield. Later on he moves his headquarters even further back and reputedly has a picnic with aristocratic officers.





08 A WEARY STALEMATE

The French occupy the Russians' biggest fleche but are expelled by midday. Poniatowski's attack is halted on the extreme right wing and the Russians wreak havoc in the rear of Prince Eugène's corps, but neither side yields significant results.

09 NAPOLEON HOLDS BACK THE GUARD

French marshals repeatedly call for reinforcements to take the Great Redoubt. Napoleon is advised to commit the Imperial Guard but he declines. A Russian appearance on his left flank hardens his resolve and yet, at a critical juncture, Napoleon does nothing. The Grande Armée does not move for two hours.

10 THE GREAT REDOUBT FALLS

At 3pm, the French launch an attack against the Great Redoubt and it is taken. Barclay de Tolly directs a Russian defence behind the Redoubt and the French fall back to the earthworks. The bombardments continue until the Russians withdraw. At 6pm, the guns fall silent.

**"ONCE BOTH SIDES HAD DECIDED TO WIN OR DIE, THEY
DID NOT STOP FIGHTING WHEN THEIR MUSKETS BROKE"**



■ In this painting by Alexander Yuriyevich Averyanov, Prince Bagration can be seen encouraging his men forward during the battle





■ After Borodino, and the dispiriting occupation of Moscow, the Grande Armée froze to death on the long retreat to safety. Fewer than 35,000 Frenchmen returned to France



■ Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov. This veteran commander had possibly suffered from brain damage after a severe head wound he sustained in 1774, making his erratic leadership at Borodino controversial



■ Above: On 31 March 1814, the armies of Russia and Prussia were the first foreign armies to enter Paris since the English during the Hundred Years' War nearly 400 years previously

RUSSIA'S REVENGE

Napoleon's failure energised the Russians, who began to push the emperor all the way back to the French capital

Despite being defeated, the baptism of fire at Borodino gave the Russian army a surge of confidence that it would not lose for the rest of the Napoleonic Wars. Meanwhile, the Grande Armée's misfortunes went from bad to worse, starting with the failed occupation of Moscow and then the disastrous retreat from the Russian capital. Throughout this time, the Russians grew in strength while Napoleon lost hundreds of thousands of men, as well as his

aura of invincibility that had once terrified Europe. Dowager Empress Maria Fyodorovna said, "He is no longer an idol, but has descended to the rank of men, and as such, he can be fought by men."

Throughout 1813, the Russians pushed into Europe and persuaded other powers to turn against France. Prussia and Austria, both reluctant allies of Napoleon, declared war on him in March and August respectively. Although Napoleon often defeated the new

coalition, he was now on the back foot and was comprehensively defeated at Leipzig on 16 October. Paris itself fell on 31 March 1814 and Tsar Alexander rode into the capital to surprising acclaim. A Russian officer, Pavel Pushin wrote, "All of them expressed genuine happiness, shouting, 'Vive Alexander!' Just yesterday these same people were yelling, 'Vive Napoleon'." The wheel had come full circle and Napoleon abdicated on 6 April.

active man of Marengo, Austerlitz etc. We did not feel satisfied; our judgements were severe."

Meanwhile, the leadership was no better on the Russian side. Kutuzov's command was lethargic; he had no coherent strategy, spent most of the battle at his headquarters at Gorki reacting to appeals and bad reports and often deferred to Quartermaster General Karl von Toll saying "Karl, whatever you say, I will do." Carl von Clausewitz observed: "He appeared destitute of inward activity, of any clear view of surrounding occurrences, of any liveliness of perception, or independence of action." Kutuzov rode out to observe the battle only once and apparently moved his headquarters back to host a picnic with aristocratic officers.

Nonetheless the battle raged on. French efforts were concentrated against the Great Redoubt, which finally fell at around 10am. Captain François recalled: "We hopped over the roundshot as it bounded through the grass. A line of Russian soldiers tried to halt us, but we delivered a volley at 30 paces and walked over them. The gunners tried to beat us back with ramrods and levering spikes. We fought hand-to-hand with them and they were formidable adversaries." Despite this, the Russians retook the Redoubt and few French soldiers survived.

Elsewhere on the Russian right wing, Generals Platov and Uvarov launched a cavalry raid into the French rear across the Kolocha that wreaked havoc but, like elsewhere, they were swept back. Their attack seemed in vain but it did have an unforeseen consequence. The time was between 11am and midday and the French attacks had temporarily stopped. New Russian defence lines were being formed and they had retaken the Redoubt. The Grande Armée could not push the advantage home and there were constant calls for reinforcements, but for Napoleon this meant sending in his elite regiment, the Imperial Guard, who numbered approximately 25,000 men. They had not seen action but Napoleon was reluctant to send in his last reserve. He was on the verge of deploying them but the Russian cavalry appeared and Napoleon called a halt.

The Guard was never used, but had Napoleon deployed them at this critical point, when many of the Russian defences had been breached, the battle might have been decisively won. As it was, the bloodshed dragged on. Even during a temporary 'pause', the cannonade continued and ripped into the static troops. Captain Jean de Marlots recalled appalling sights such as when he was talking to one of his subalterns: "Just as he was telling me that he lacked for nothing, except perhaps a glass of water, a cannonball tore him in two." Not long after that: "I gave my horse to a trooper to hold for half a minute, and the man was promptly killed."

TAKING THE REDOUBT

This terrible interval ended just after 2pm when the French began assembling for an assault on the Redoubt. 200 cannon were used to pound the earthworks before an advance by three divisions of infantry and two masses of heavy cavalry flanked on either side. The cavalry overtook the infantry and charged around the Redoubt before pouring in and meeting a waiting mass of muskets and bayonets. As the casualties mounted, they were simply replaced by more soldiers.

Watching the scene from the rear, artilleryman Colonel Griois said: "It would be difficult to convey our feelings as we watched this brilliant feat of arms. Every one of us would have liked to help the cavalry which we saw leaping over ditches and scrambling up ramparts under a hail of canister shots, and a roar of joy resounded on all sides as they became masters of the Redoubt." However, it was a different story inside, as Colonel Meerheimb recalled: "Horsemen and footsoldiers, gripped by a frenzy of slaughter, were butchering each other without any semblance of order."

At 3.30pm, the Grande Armée occupied the Redoubt, but the Russian forces reorganised and formed squares immediately behind it. Their defiance was largely down to Barclay de Tolly who, despite his demotion, remained calm throughout the battle and assembled enough cavalry to launch a counter-charge and bombard the French who now occupied the Redoubt. The Russians had now technically lost the battle but they did not easily give in. The cannon continued to fire for hours and the only progress that the Grande Armée made was when Marshal Poniatowski pushed the Russians back beyond the village of Utitsa. The throes of the battle finally petered out at around 6pm when the Russians withdrew a kilometre away and the guns fell silent.

REMAINING CARNAGE

The battlefield that Napoleon belatedly surveyed was a horrendous sight. The ground was littered with the mutilated dead and wounded. Thanks to the continuous artillery fire, severed limbs and

exposed entrails everywhere – of men and horses. The worst sight of all was the grisly Redoubt, which, according to one officer, "...exceeded the worst horrors one could ever dream of. The approaches, ditches and earthworks had disappeared under a mound of dead and dying, an average of six to eight men were heaped on top of one other."

There were hardly any prisoners taken, which was unusual in a period when victory was measured by the number of POWs. "The number of dead testified to the courage of the vanquished, rather than to the scale of the victory," the Comte de Ségur later commented. For Napoleon, this was a victory, but at a terrible price, and his army was too exhausted to pursue the Russians. One officer of the Imperial Guard recalled that the men spent the night, "...in the mud, without fires, surrounded by dead and wounded, whose plaintive cries broke one's heart." On the other side the Russians were in high spirits despite having been narrowly defeated. Prince Piotr Viazemsky did not feel beaten and was proud to have stood up to Napoleon: "Everyone was still in such a rapturous state of mind, they were all such recent witnesses of the bravery of our troops, that the thought of failure, or even only partial failure, would not enter our minds."

The cost was enormous. Until the Battle of the Somme in 1916, Borodino was the worst single day's fighting in recorded history. The Russians suffered casualties between 38,000-58,000 men including 29 generals. Entire units virtually ceased to exist, such as the Shirvansk Regiment, which started the battle with 1,300 troops and was reduced to 98 men by 3pm. The Grande Armée had comparatively lighter losses of 28,000, including 11 dead generals, but all of these men could not be easily replaced so far from friendly territory. Napoleon had also virtually destroyed his cavalry, with dire consequences for mobility and logistics. In addition, it has been calculated that the Grande Armée alone had fired 60,000-91,000 artillery rounds and 1.4 million musket shots. This roughly averages out at 100 cannon and 2,300 musket discharges per minute. One modern historian has likened the chaos to, "...a fully loaded 747 crashing, with no survivors, every five minutes for eight hours."

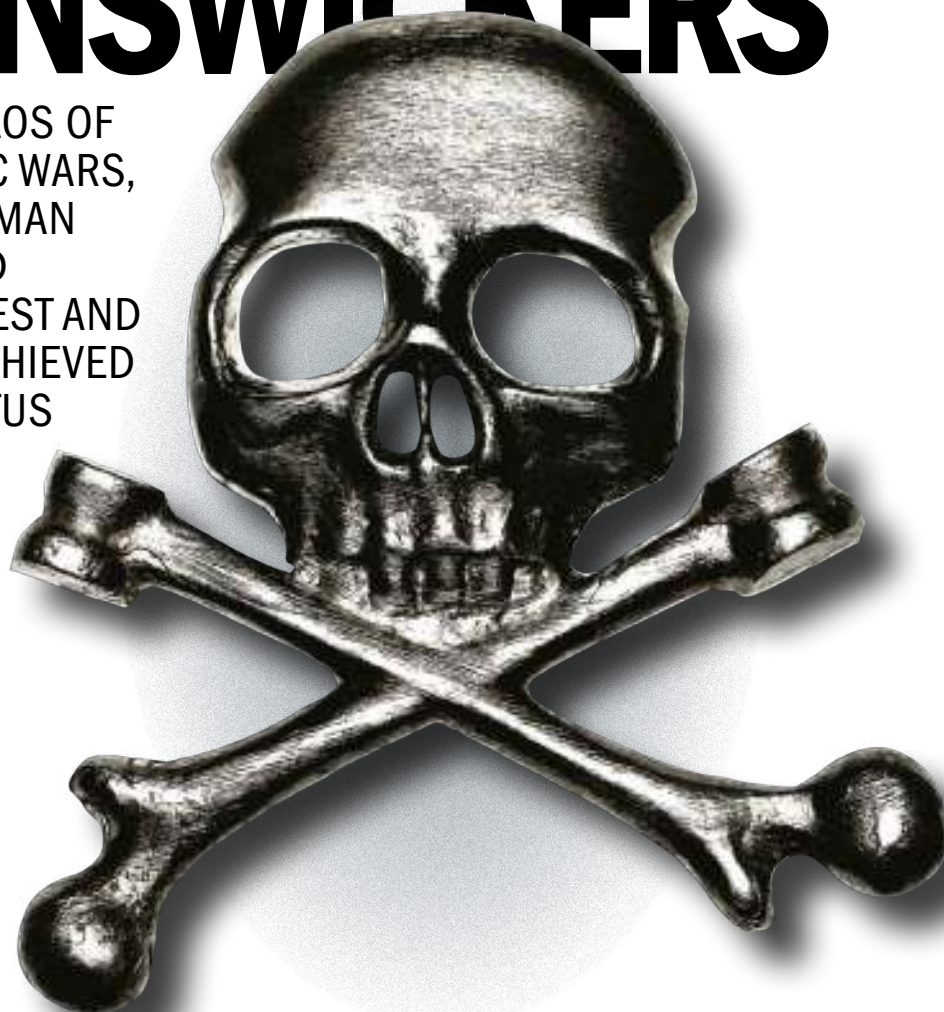
Napoleon had won this battle but his army was irretrievably weakened and he found himself cut off far from his main supply base. Nonetheless his pride would not yet permit a retreat and his exhausted force continued on their march towards Moscow. Soon the Grande Armée occupied a deserted and deliberately torched capital, and when Napoleon came to the realisation that Tsar Alexander would never seek terms, he ignominiously retreated back through the merciless Russian winter and condemned what was left of his army to a frozen oblivion. It is estimated that between June 1812 and February 1813, about 1 million people on all sides died because of the campaign, with only 35,000 Frenchmen ultimately returning to France. The pivot of this nightmare was that neither Borodino nor Napoleonic Europe ever truly recovered.

■ Napoleon watching Moscow burn. In the aftermath of Borodino, the Russians torched their own capital to deny the Grande Armée shelter, supplies and a glorious victory



THE BLACK BRUNSWICKERS

DURING THE CHAOS OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, ONE SMALL GERMAN DUCHY RESISTED FRENCH CONQUEST AND ITS SOLDIERS ACHIEVED LEGENDARY STATUS



During the War of the Fourth Coalition, on 14 October 1806 at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt, the aging Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg – by then in Prussian service

and in command of the Prussian main army – was severely wounded by a musket ball. His second in command had been wounded too and soon his army, suffering from an outdated and clumsy command system and using outdated tactics, was defeated by a French force only half its size. Having lost both eyeballs to the shot, the 71-year-old Duke was returned to Brunswick where, because three of his four sons were unfit to rule, he declared his youngest son Frederick William his successor.

The Duke then appealed to Napoleon Bonaparte himself, pleading mercy for his neutral country and asking for himself the right to die in peace. When these wishes were bluntly denied, he left Brunswick to seek refuge in neutral Denmark. After saying farewell to his wife, sister and eldest sons, he succumbed to his wounds on 10 November 1806.

On 26 October, a regiment of French cavalry had entered Brunswick, formally taking control in the name of the French emperor by removing the old coat of arms from Brunswick Chateau. The house of Brunswick had ceased to exist, while its territory was incorporated into the Kingdom of Westphalia, ruled by Napoleon's brother Jérôme.

The young and dispossessed Duke Frederick William, who up until then had been serving with distinction as general major of the Prussian Army during the Battle of Jena and the Battle of Lübeck, withdrew to the Duchy of Oels in lower Silesia, which he had inherited in 1805. Having turned down an annual pension of 100,000 guilders, which had been offered to him by the King of Westphalia, he travelled to Austria in 1808, lending his services as an independent German lord and ally.

PLOTTING REVENGE

In 1809, at the outbreak of the War of the Fifth Coalition, the dispossessed Duke of Brunswick, fuelled by his hunger for revenge

against Napoleon and the desire to retake possession of his ancestral lands, seized the opportunity and offered to raise a corps of men to fight on Austria's side. It was to consist of two battalions of line infantry, a battalion of Jägers, one company of sharpshooters and a mounted contingent of lancers and hussars.

The headquarters of the new unit was based in the town of Nachod in north-east Bohemia and it didn't take long before the first men arrived to volunteer for service under the banner of the young duke. It is noteworthy that only a small fraction of these men were actually Brunswickers. Due to the close vicinity of the Prussian border and the fact that the Treaty of Tilsit had forcefully reduced the Prussian army to a maximum size of 42,000 men, most of the volunteers were discharged Prussian soldiers and officers. As Prussia had expressly forbidden its citizens to join any kind of German Freikorps, most had made the journey in secret. On 1 April 1809, the corps was raised officially. To finance it, Frederick William had pawned his estates in Oels to Prussia for the significant sum of 2 million Talers.

THE MARCH OF 1809

In the spring 1809, Austria saw its chance to take revenge for its defeat at Austerlitz in 1805. The French were locked into a bloody conflict in Spain and in a number of German states, unrest and revolution was in the air.

On 10 April 1809, Austria attacked Bavaria and launched another offensive on the Duchy of Warsaw five days later – both states were allies of France. In the meantime, the Duke led his men into Saxony, hoping to stir the local population to rise against the French and join the war at the side of their fellow Germans. For a number of reasons this was largely unsuccessful, although he had managed to recruit further volunteers.

The Black Host, which now numbered about 1,400 men, was still in Saxony when the Duke learned that the Austrians had been defeated at the Battle of Wagram on 6 July 1809 and had signed an armistice with France at Znaim on 12 July. Frederick William now had to decide whether to surrender as well or to continue the fight on his own. He decided to do the latter and thus began the 'March of the Black Host' (Zug der schwarzen Schar). A legendary feat of soldiery, which caught the imagination not only of fellow Germans, but of the wider European public too.

On 24 July 1809, the Black Duke told his officers that he would never accept French rule over German territory without a fight, even if this would result in his demise, and that every man not willing to stand with him would be free to leave. Knowing that their only realistic, yet highly improbable, hope of survival lay in the landing of a British army in northern Germany, 200 men and 27 officers left the unit.

On 27 July, the corps reached Halle, which up to 1807 had been a Prussian city but was now part of Westphalia. A cheering population welcomed the Black Duke and

his men as liberators. On the evening of 29 July, Halberstadt was taken from a garrison of Westphalian troops in bloody house-to-house fighting. 1,500 Westphalian soldiers surrendered the following day, and 300 of them volunteered to join the Black Host.

The glorious manner in which the Duke's men were welcomed by the local population intensified even more when they reached the border of the old Duchy of Brunswick. On its march toward the former residential town of Wolfenbüttel, hundreds of cheering and singing civilians marched amidst the ranks of the black-clad soldiers. On the 13-kilometre march on Brunswick itself, the road was lined with thousands of cheering people. A noteworthy incident occurred when the Duke was invited to spend the night inside the ducal residence of the city, which was his rightful property. He declined: "It may have been that once, but it has been stolen and now belongs to the King of Westphalia, under whose roof I do not intend to rest." He spent the night in camp among the ranks of his men.

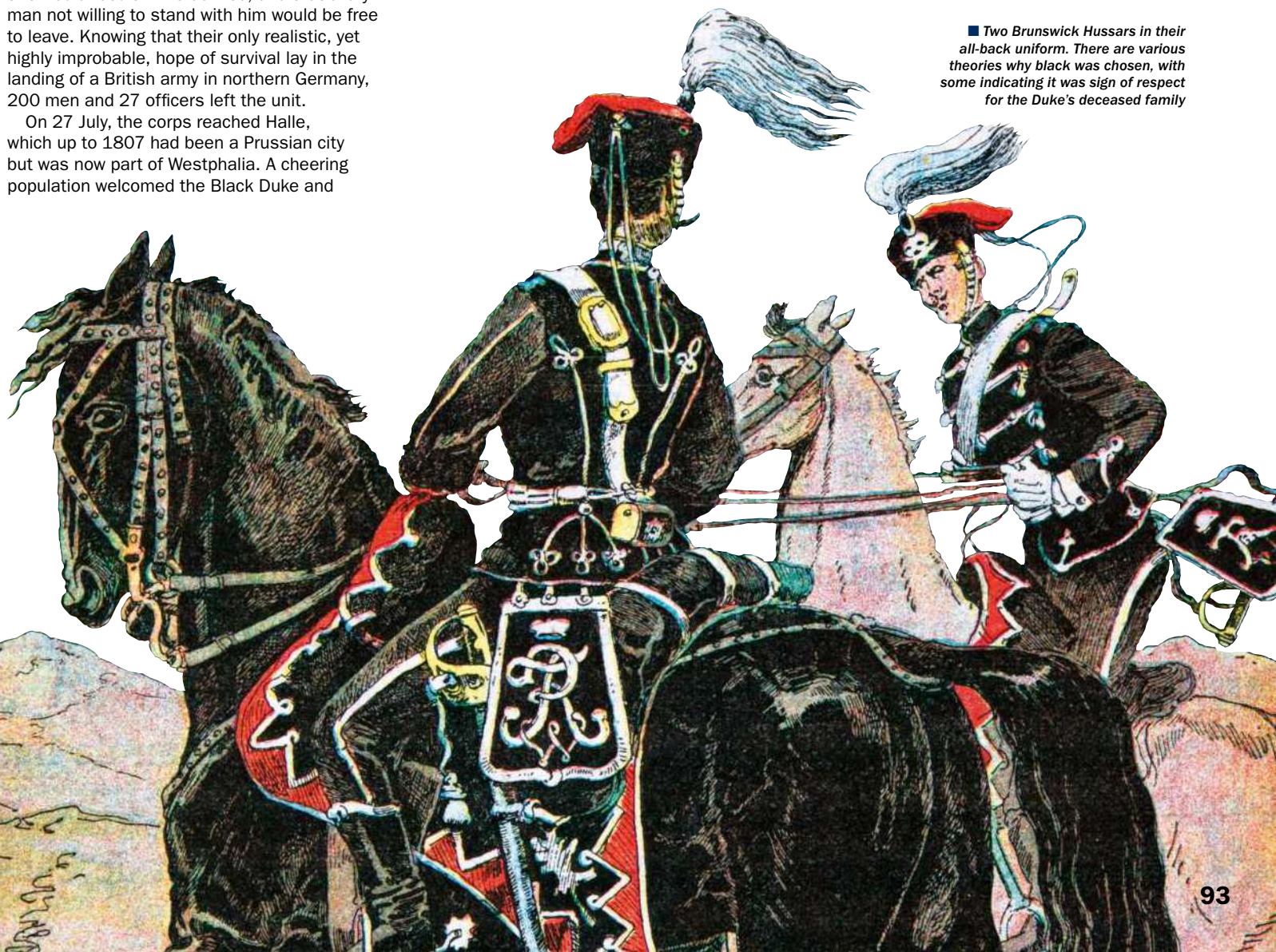
At that point, the British force on the north sea coast numbered only about 800 men, so now the Duke's hope was to lead his men to the Weser estuary where there would be ships with which he hoped to be taken to England. Later that day, upon learning that a Westphalian and Dutch Division were on the way towards the city, the Duke decided to face the Westphalian Division in battle, in an attempt to force a breakthrough to the north. Destroying a number

of vital bridges, the corps moved towards the village of Ölper to avoid being flanked.

The Black Host faced a far superior Westphalian force, which outnumbered them by more than two to one. In the pitched battle that followed, it soon became clear that all bravery could not outweigh the inferiority in numbers. It was only a matter of time until the Dutch force would enter the battle from the direction of Magdeburg – the fate of the Black Host appeared to be sealed. Yet after nightfall, the Duke received the news that the Westphalians had withdrawn and that the way north was clear. Why the Westphalian General Reubel had decided to pull his troops back has never been completely explained.

In forced marches of more than 48 kilometres per day, the Black Host continued heading north. They were closely pursued by the enemy on the way but still managed to continue picking up volunteers as they went. On 3 August, the Host reached Hannover where the garrison surrendered without a fight. The River Weser was crossed two days later, after which the border into the Duchy of Oldenburg was crossed. There the local regent, Peter Frederick von Oldenburg, whose lands had come under French rule after the Confederation of the Rhine was formed, had already received news of the Black Duke's arrival – as well as orders to stop him at all costs. Yet, being related to the House of Brunswick, von Oldenburg made sure that his soldiers always were deployed where the Black Host was not.

■ Two Brunswick Hussars in their all-black uniform. There are various theories why black was chosen, with some indicating it was sign of respect for the Duke's deceased family



To keep up appearances, a small unit of Oldenburg cavalry confronted the Duke's force only to surrender before a shot was fired. Now being prisoners, Oldenburg Dragoons served the Duke as valuable guides through foreign territory. Always evading the enemy, and after a number of skirmishes, the Black Host reached Elsfleth on 6 August 1809. In the course of the next two days, all naval vessels anchoring there were requisitioned. Finally, the Black Host sailed out of the Weser estuary accompanied by the cheers of hundreds of people lining the dykes and under sporadic fire of Danish field artillery. On 9 August, the corps reached Heligoland from where it was taken to England on British troop transports.

The King of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte, fell into a rage when he learned that Frederick William had been able to escape. Furious with General Reubel, he immediately ordered him to be replaced. Yet by then General Reubel had already vanished, having quietly boarded a ship that had taken him to America.

It was this 482-kilometre march through enemy-held territory that would form the basis of the Black Host's legendary reputation – but the war had only just started.

THE BRUNSWICK-OELS JÄGERS

After arriving in England, the British parliament granted Frederick William an annual pension

of 7,000 pounds Sterling and in the following months, the Black Host went through a period of training and reorganisation. Not being able to recruit locally anymore, the ranks of the Host were filled with German soldiers from prisoner camps in England and by foreign mercenaries and volunteers that trickled in not just from Germany but also from Poland, Switzerland, Holland and Serbia. This boost of numbers watered down the discipline and morale of a force that had so far consisted of patriotic German volunteers. The men were issued with British pattern muskets and rifles, sabres, ammunition pouches and backpacks.

The main uniform colour of the Blacks was retained and only some minor details of cut and style were altered. They were then formed into two regiments, one of infantry and one of cavalry and taken into English service under the name of The Duke of Brunswick-Oels Infantry and Cavalry, or more colloquially The Brunswick-Oels Jägers. After spending some time on the island of Guernsey in the English Channel, and in Ireland, they finally shipped to Lisbon on 10 August 1810. Having reached Portugal, the Brunswickers were placed under command of the Duke of Wellington and fought in British service in Portugal, Spain and southern France.

Elements of the Brunswick Hussars fought in Sicily and only returned from there in 1816. During the campaign, the Brunswick

infantry did not serve as a coherent force. Companies were split up and subordinated to a number of British divisions with the majority serving in General Lowrey Cole's 4th Division. The regiment fought with distinction during the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, the Siege of Badajoz and in the battles of Salamanca and Vittoria in the Pyrenees and in southern France at Nivelles and the Nive.

A NEW ARMY

On 10 November 1814, the Brunswick-Oels Jägers left English service. While most mercenaries and foreigners left the unit, the core of the surviving, original men of the Black Host returned home to Brunswick. Napoleon's catastrophic defeat in Russia followed by the Prusso-Russian advance across northern Germany in 1813 had allowed the Duke to reclaim his lands and titles and he immediately set out to raise a new army to defend his ancestral homeland. His Peninsula veterans formed the nucleus of a new battalion numbering 672 men, which was designated Leibbataillon, the Life Battalion, on 14 April 1815. By then, the army of Brunswick consisted of a light infantry brigade, one line and one reserve infantry brigade, a regiment of hussars, a battery of foot and a battery of horse artillery.

On 26 February 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte staged his legendary escape from exile on the

"ON 24 JULY 1809, THE BLACK DUKE TOLD HIS OFFICERS THAT HE WOULD NEVER ACCEPT FRENCH RULE OVER GERMAN TERRITORY WITHOUT A FIGHT"

■ Brunswick infantry in action at Quatre Bras where they helped thwart Marshall Ney's attempt to drive a wedge between the allied armies

BRUNSWICKER INFANTRY

German infantry fought with all the trappings of the Napoleonic wars

CANTEEN

The wooden canteen was first introduced in 1793. Trotter & Sons, the main manufacturer, had made 200,000 of them by 1803. Yet canteens were not standardised equipment, and a number of other types made from wood and tin were available to British troops throughout the Napoleonic Wars. The Brunswicker's canteen is marked BLJ for Braunschweig Lauenburg'sche Jäger.

"THE BRUNSWICKER'S CANTEEN IS MARKED BLJ FOR BRAUNSCHWEIG LAUENBURG'SCHE JÄGER"

BAYONET

The Brown Bess Bayonet was the standard infantry bayonet issued from 1722 to around 1840 for use with the musket of the same name. It was made with a socket that fitted over the barrel of the musket and had a slot that slid past the fore sight. Later, bayonets would have a locking catch. The blade was offset to one side allowing the soldier to load the musket without injuring himself.

SHAKO

The shako became popular from about 1800 and was worn by the majority of regiments in the armies of the day. Made of hardened leather and thick felt, it retained its shape and offered some protection for the head, while its visor shaded the wearer's eyes from the sun. The Austrian-style shako displays the skull and crossbones insignia of the Black Host infantry.

BROWN BESS MUSKET

This musket became the standard issue of the British Army in 1797 and was issued to the Black Brunswickers after their arrival in England in 1809. Throughout the Napoleonic Wars, nearly 3 million guns of this type were manufactured and distributed. The only change in their manufacture during this period was updating the switch from a swan-necked cock to a reinforced style in 1809. Due to the sheer numbers manufactured, this pattern saw use as late as 1850 throughout the British army and militia.



■ The Brown Bess used a flintlock mechanism that made it somewhat unreliable in adverse weather conditions

island of Elba. Landing on the French coast with a miniature army consisting of 600 guardsmen, he quickly advanced on Paris, swelling the ranks of his force with an endless stream of old soldiers and French regular troops who joyfully returned to serve under their former emperor. On 19 March, the Bourbons left Paris and fled for Belgium and by the following day, Napoleon was back in power. Only two months later, he had an army of 280,000 men at his disposal with the same number expected to join within eight weeks. War had returned to Europe, and the allied armies of Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia with their host of minor allied states, were once again mobilised and set into motion to face the French.

On 15 April 1815, the Black Duke mobilised his force, which arrived in its positions near Brussels on 11 May.

QUATRE-BRAS AND WATERLOO – VICTORY OR DEATH

Even though he had a formidable army at his disposal, Napoleon was faced with a strategic dilemma. In total, the allied armies numbered more than 1 million men – if he'd allow these armies to gather and link up, they would surely overwhelm him. The only alternative was to strike a preventive blow on the enemy while he was still forming up. By preventing the allied armies from joining forces he could defeat the contingents one by one, forcing the Prussians back across the Rhine and then turning against the British and their German, Belgian and Dutch allies, forcing the former to evacuate its forces from the continent.

On 16 June 1815, a French army under command of Napoleon himself faced a Prussian force commanded by the venerable Field Marshal Blücher. Meanwhile, at the small hamlet of Quatre-Bras, a French Army Corps under command of Marshal Ney engaged an advancing allied army commanded by the Duke of Wellington. The day would see two major battles whose outcome would be decisive for the course of the battle fought at Waterloo two days later. The strategically important crossroads at Quatre-Bras needed to be held to allow Wellington's force to link up with the Prussian Army at Ligny. At the morning of the same day, Wellington promised to Blücher that he would rush to his support if he was not attacked himself. Yet this was exactly what happened, as Napoleon had ordered a French Corps under Marshal Ney to secure his left flank and take the crossroads at Quatre Bras.

In the evening, a pitched and costly battle developed in which troops from Britain, Hanover, Brunswick and Nassau fought an initially superior French force, which had to leave the field by the end of the day. Even though Wellington had been left in possession of the field, Quatre-Bras had been a tactical draw – yet this result would be decisive.

By denying Wellington to rush to the aid Blücher, Napoleon had been able to defeat the Prussians at Ligny, yet he failed to destroy them completely, mainly because he could not make use of the corps tied up in battle at

Quatre-Bras. This in turn allowed Blücher to lead his army to the aid of the arguably beaten Wellington two days later. The battle of Quatre-Bras had paved the road to victory at Waterloo. A total of about 8,800 men had been killed, yet it was the Brunswick contingent that suffered the worst blow at about 5pm. Corporal Ernst Kübel serving in the 2nd company of the Life Battalion later wrote:

“The French cavalry now turned to attack us and it can not have been further away than 50 paces. In the same moment, our serene highness the Duke, coming from the direction of our hussars and lancers, without anyone to accompany him, rode in from the half-right, right between us and the French cavalry, which in the same moment opened fire by platoons.

The horse of his serene highness reared and did not want to go on any further, and in the same moment a second salvo was fired, from which our most serene Duke received his wound. One ball had, as it later turned out, grazed his right wrist then pierced his chest on the right before exiting at his left shoulder. This way our most beloved lord fell to the ground on the right side of his horse. He was lying right between the French and our side, about 25 paces away.

[So] as not to leave our valued lord to the advancing enemy, I talked two of my comrades, Bugler Auer and Jäger Reckau, to make the dangerous attempt to take him back to our side. Determined, we jumped forward picking him up as carefully as the situation allowed it before quickly carrying him back using our rifles as a stretcher.”

The mortally wounded Duke was carried back to a group of houses near the road towards Brussels where he succumbed to his injury shortly afterwards. The Black Duke was no more, and his adjutant, Colonel Elias Olfermann, immediately assumed command of the Corps. In total, the Black Brunswickers had lost 188 men killed and 396 wounded.

On Sunday 18 June, the Duke Wellington, aiming to block the French advance towards Brussels, had deployed his forces along a ridge of Mont Saint Jean near the village of Waterloo. Deployed as part of the Duke's reserve corps,

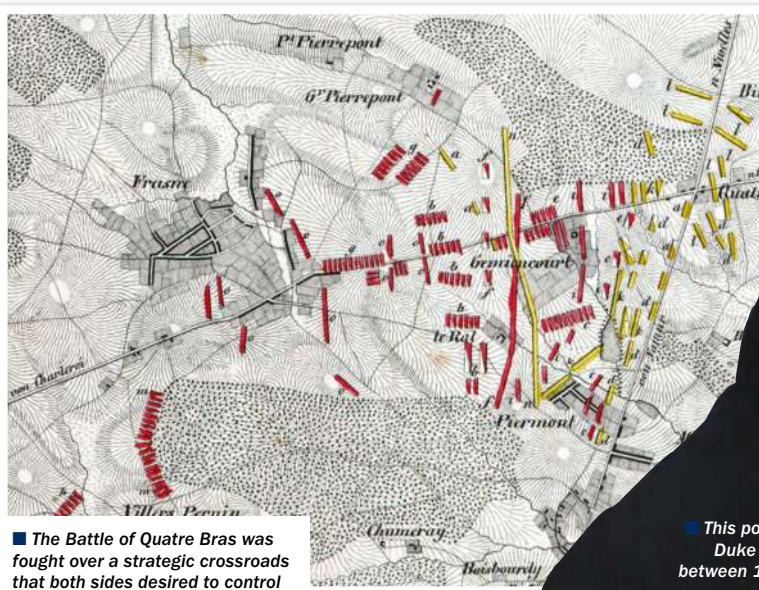
the Brunswickers were positioned in relative safety behind the crest of the ridge, which in turn saved them from the severe casualties inflicted by the French bombardment that was to be the prelude to the battle. Later, the corps moved into the furthestmost line, taking the place of the British Foot Guards, which had been sent to reinforce the defenders of Chateau d'Hougoumont. There they faced the combined charge of the French cavalry that Marshall Ney launched against the Allied lines.

Formed into squares, the Allied infantry, the Black Brunswickers among them, resisted repeated attacks from more than 9,000 French horsemen. The squares remained unbroken, while at the same time the Brunswick Hussars, as part of the 7th British Cavalry Brigade, counter-charged and harried the French cavalry where the opportunity offered itself.

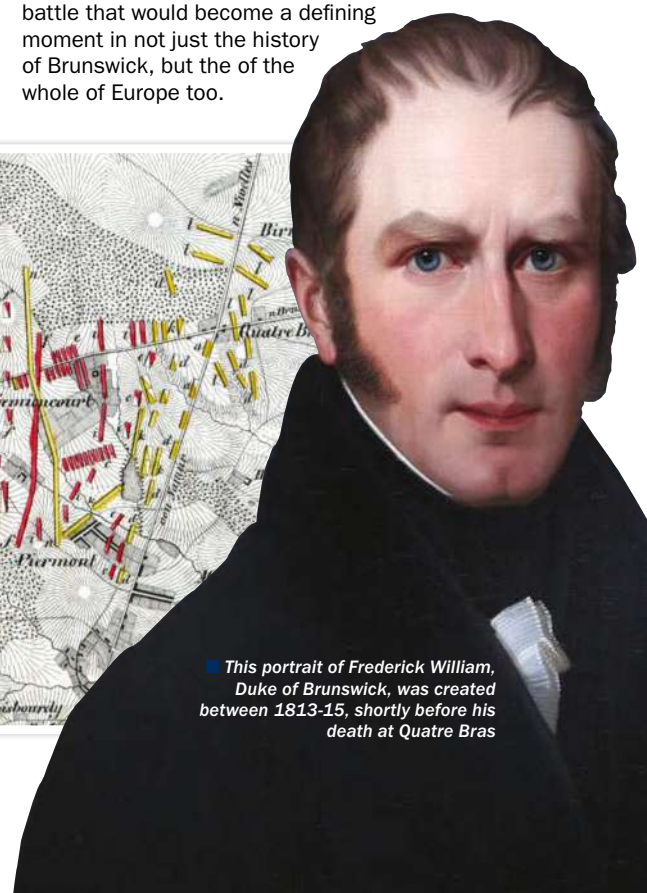
When later that day the French took the fortified farmhouse of La Haye Sainte, it left a dangerous cleft in the allied line. The Brunswick infantry was moved forward to fill it, yet this happened to be one the spots where Napoleon aimed an assault of his Imperial Guard, with the aim of smashing through the weakened and exhausted Allied infantry. When the legendary and battle-hardened Grenadiers of the French Middle Guard advanced on the mostly raw and inexperienced Brunswickers, they broke and fell back towards the allied cavalry reserve.

Once the French Guards had been halted and finally thrown back, the Brunswickers had sufficiently rallied to participate in the general advance of the Allied army and finally brought victory. At the end of the day, 154 soldiers of the Black Host had been killed, 456 wounded and another 50 were missing.

The Battle of Waterloo ended Napoleon's reign of the 'Hundred Days' and heralded the end of the French First Empire. It is tragic that Frederick William, the Black Duke, who had spent his whole life fighting Napoleon Bonaparte, was not there to witness the ultimate downfall of the French emperor in a battle that would become a defining moment in not just the history of Brunswick, but the of the whole of Europe too.



■ The Battle of Quatre Bras was fought over a strategic crossroads that both sides desired to control



■ This portrait of Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick, was created between 1813-15, shortly before his death at Quatre Bras

THE BLACK PARADE

A dynastic tragedy lies at the heart of this truly impressive but indelibly macabre uniform

Due to their mostly black uniforms – only the sharpshooters and lancers wore green, black being the colour of death and revenge – the Duke's Freikorps (Free Corps) (whose motto and battle cry was "Sieg oder Tod" meaning death or victory), was colloquially known as "Schar der Rache" (Host of Revenge), "Schwarze Legion" (Black Legion), "Die schwarzen Krähen" (The Black Crows), "Die Schwarzen" (The Blacks) or most commonly, "Die schwarze Schar" (The Black Host).

The colour had been chosen to mourn for the French occupied homeland, the death of the old Duke and that the young Duke's wife, Princess Marie of Baden, who had died during childbirth in 1808.

To complete this sinister look, the Freikorp's line infantry and hussars wore a shako that displayed the symbol of a human skull, similar to the one worn by the Prussian Black Hussars. In 1652, one of Frederick's ancestors had founded the Knightly Order of the Skull and both may have inspired the young Duke to choose this symbol for his unit.

Life as a soldier of the Black Host was generally a bit better as in other armies of the period, pay was good and even the rank and file was treated with a certain kind of respect. There was no flogging and officers addressed the rank and file with formal German 'Sie'.

"TO COMPLETE THIS SINISTER LOOK, THE FREIKORP'S LINE INFANTRY AND HUSSARS WORE A SHAKO THAT DISPLAYED THE SYMBOL OF A HUMAN SKULL"

■ **Left:** The parade uniform of a lieutenant of the 17th hussar regiment, complete with bearskin cap and skull badge, c.1890s

■ **Bottom, left:** The sharpshooters of the Black Brunswickers wore dark green jackets instead of the usual black





FALL OF AN EMPIRE

Exiled to the island of Elba, Bonaparte plotted a final attempt to conquer Europe once and for all

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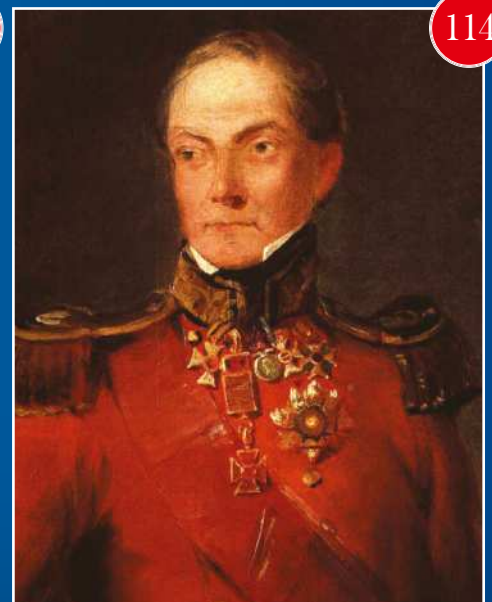




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STATE OF PLAY: 1814

FRANCE STANDS ON THE BRINK OF ANNIHILATION



Europe in 1814 was a continent tired of war. France lay in tatters after continual hammering from various Allied coalitions since the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars. Britain, Portugal and their Bourbon Spanish allies had thrown the French out of the Iberian Peninsula in the Peninsular Wars.

Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, later to become immortalised at the Battle of Waterloo, led the Allied forces to victory and began to push into southern France in the beginning of the year.

On the other side of the country the French were again on the defensive. After the cataclysmic Battle of Leipzig in 1813, the Russians, Austrians, Swedes and Prussians pushed into north-east France, ready to end the French threat once and for all.

The vastly outnumbered French could not hope to contain the war on two fronts and after Paris fell in March, Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to Elba. After decades of bloodshed, the major European powers saw the need to reorganise the balance of power in Europe. By the summer a steady stream of kings, emperors, prime ministers, ambassadors and other representatives converged on Vienna to reshape the geographical and political landscape that had been shattered by Napoleon's ambitions.

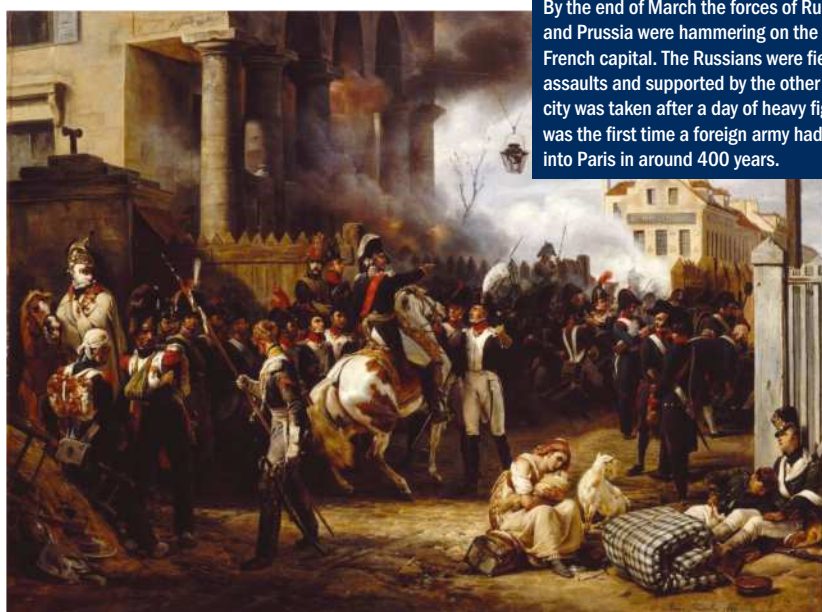
While peace now reigned, powers like Austria were concerned that their enemy had simply shifted from France to the growing dominance of Russia and were forced to make concessions to maintain the balance of power. While the congress almost came to blows over the partition of Poland, the year ended with a tentative peace settling over the battle-scarred continent.

PEACE CELEBRATIONS

After the treaties of Fontainebleau and Paris were signed, the leaders of the Allied coalition travelled to England to celebrate the newfound peace. Sumptuous banquets, races at Ascot and a naval review entertained the great and good of Europe before the more serious business of the Congress of Vienna began.

BATTLE OF PARIS

By the end of March the forces of Russia, Austria and Prussia were hammering on the doors of the French capital. The Russians were fierce in their assaults and supported by the other powers, the city was taken after a day of heavy fighting. This was the first time a foreign army had marched into Paris in around 400 years.



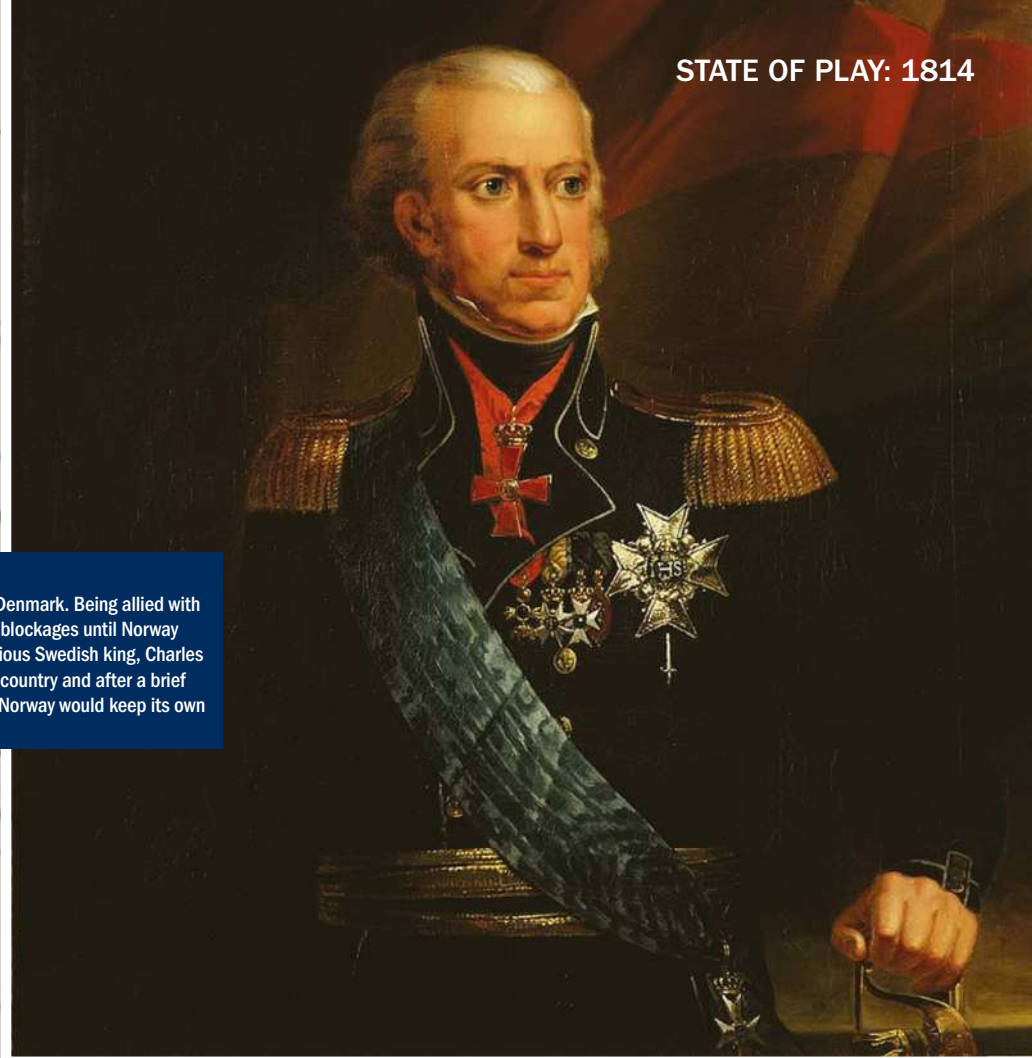
NAPOLEON ABDICATES

Surrounded on all sides but unwilling to admit his defeat, Napoleon calls for almost a million new soldiers to be levied. When the army fails to materialise and faced with mutiny from his army chiefs, the emperor is forced to step down and the Bourbon dynasty is restored.



A SCANDINAVIAN UNION

Norway began 1814 in a union with its neighbour, Denmark. Being allied with the French, the countries were subjected to British blockages until Norway became an independent country in May. The ambitious Swedish king, Charles XIII & II, saw an opportunity to gain power over the country and after a brief conflict became monarch of both states; although Norway would keep its own constitution and parliament.



STATE OF PLAY: 1814



RETURN OF THE POPE

Since 1808 the Papal States had been under French occupation. With the French Empire being dismantled, the Papal States were allowed to return to autonomous rule under Pope Pius VII who, on his return to the holy city, was hailed as a hero by the Italian people.



THE OPERETTA EMPEROR

COULD AN ISLAND HOLD AN EMPEROR'S INTEREST?
ELBA, AND EUROPE, WOULD SOON FIND OUT



In the evening of 28 April 1814, Napoleon embarked upon the barge of His Majesty's frigate Undaunted. The emperor was going into exile although in exile he would still be an emperor.

But his empire, once stretching from the Atlantic to the Baltic, was to be reduced to an island of 224 square kilometres in the Tyrrhenian Sea, ten kilometres from Italy. According to the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, Napoleon Bonaparte was to abdicate as Emperor of France and become Emperor of Elba instead.

Today, Elba is part of Italy but through history it has changed hands many times and, at the start of the 19th century, it had become a French possession. But under the terms of the treaty, Elba became the personal possession of Napoleon. Lying between Corsica and Italy, there's no record of Napoleon having visited in his youth but it was close enough to at

■ *Napoleon leaving Elba to make his last, great throw of the dice*



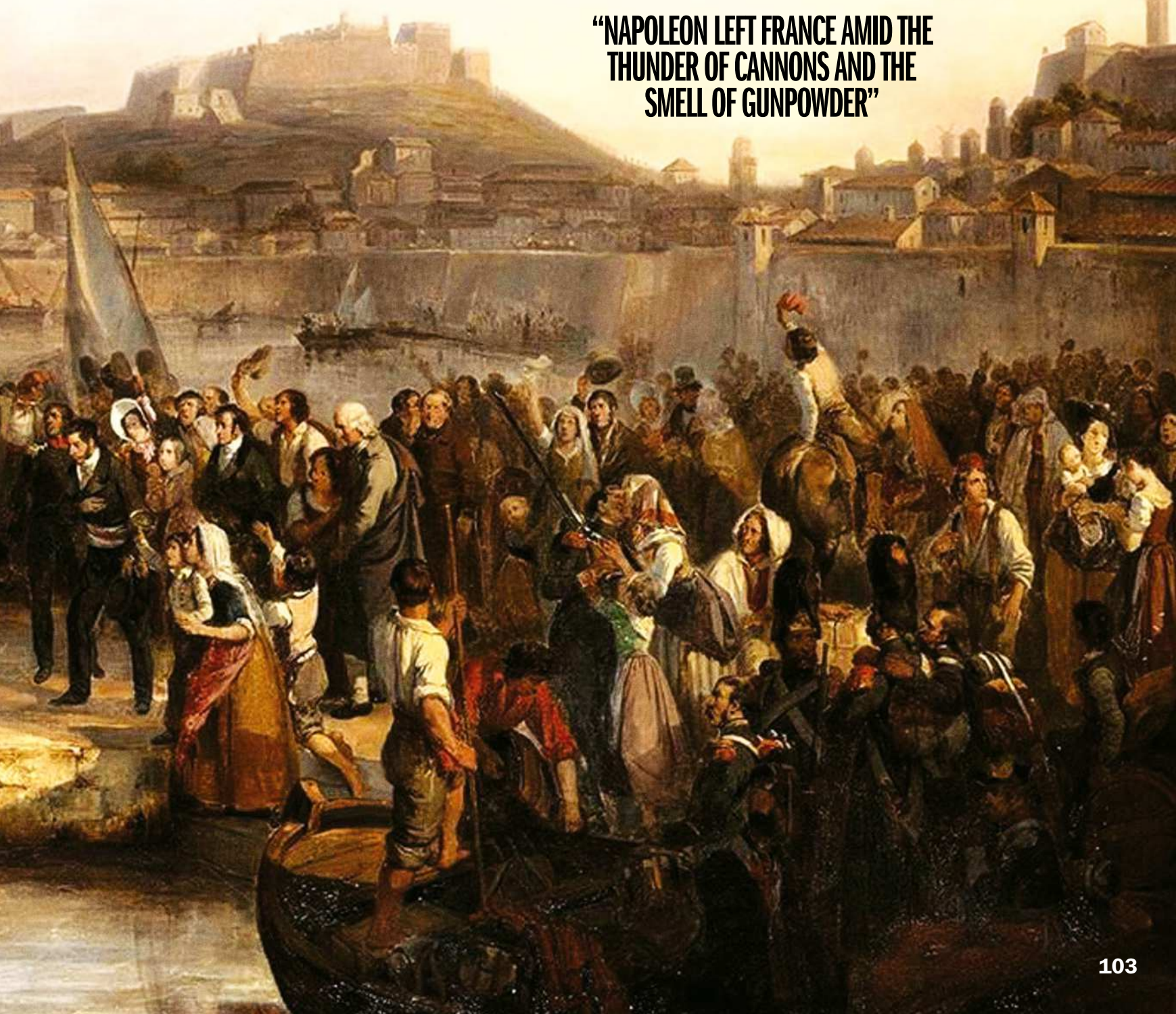
least offer a familiar environment. Under the circumstances in France, it was the best he could have hoped for but even so, he took his time getting there. First, Napoleon took eight days to reach Fréjus, on France's Mediterranean coast, after leaving Fontainebleau. The fallen emperor spent much of the journey travelling in disguise to avoid Royalist assassins and the harangues of ordinary people. The original plan had been for Napoleon to embark on the ship that was to take him into exile from St Tropez, but he insisted that it should be from Fréjus that he leave France. Fréjus was where he had landed, in 1799, after his return from Egypt, at the start of his extraordinary ascent to power. Now it would witness his fall. But even so, he could barely tear himself away. It was only when the captain of the *Undaunted*, Sir Thomas Ussher, arrived at the inn in Fréjus where he was staying to inform him that the barge was waiting that Napoleon could bring himself to leave.

But, ever the stickler for imperial pretension, Napoleon insisted that, as a sovereign, he be given a 21-gun salute upon boarding the *Undaunted*. Despite naval regulations stating there should be no gun salutes after sunset, the captain of the frigate acceded to his demands and Napoleon left France amid the thunder of cannons and the smell of gunpowder. Three days later, on 1 May, the *Undaunted* came within sight of Corsica. Napoleon came onto the bridge of the frigate and watched his homeland pass by. But there was to be no port of call there and, on the evening of 3 May, the *Undaunted* set anchor in Portoferraio, Elba's main town and port. The next day Napoleon came ashore to take possession of his new kingdom. The mayor, Pietro Traditi, gave Napoleon the keys to the island but the occasion rendered the poor man so nervous that he could not say a word.

Napoleon, with his usual attention to detail, had already designed a new flag for his island

realm: a white background with a red stripe running diagonally across it, the stripe marked by three golden bees. It remains the flag of Elba to this day. The population greeted their new ruler with enthusiasm, although that enthusiasm was newly come by. When the news had initially filtered through to the Elbans that they were being given as a gift to Napoleon, there had been some protests but these quickly died away as a perennially poor people were struck by the realisation that the emperor in exile would bring much needed business and employment to the island. The golden bees of the new flag were exactly what the island's inhabitants hoped for. So they crowded around their new ruler as he processed into Portoferraio, making his way to the church where a *Te Deum* was offered to God in thanksgiving for Napoleon's safe arrival. Then, the Emperor of Elba was shown to his new quarters: the *Biscotteria*, a biscuit factory that had been hastily converted into

"NAPOLEON LEFT FRANCE AMID THE THUNDER OF CANNONS AND THE SMELL OF GUNPOWDER"





■ Napoleon bidding farewell to his guard at Fontainebleau as he prepares to leave for his exile on Elba

an imperial residence. For Napoleon, it must all have seemed a long way from the Tuileries Palace in Paris.

THE BEST LITTLE EMPEROR IN THE WORLD

At the height of his power, Napoleon had ruled an empire encompassing over 2 million square kilometres. Now he had 224. But they were going to be the best ruled 224 square kilometres in the world. On 5 May, the day after his arrival, Napoleon woke at 4am, went to inspect the defences of Portoferraio and did not return for breakfast until 10am. This was to be the mark of Napoleon's time on Elba: ceaseless activity and movement. A week later, Napoleon toured the island and selected a villa better suited to his eminence: the Palazzina dei Mulini, overlooking his new capital (these days it's a museum, commemorating the emperor's stay on Elba, complete with the 1,100 books that Napoleon, a voracious reader, brought from France).

As Emperor of Elba, Napoleon's routine was fairly strict. He would wake at four, read dispatches, dictate letters, look at the papers and walk in the garden before a nap and riding out to see the various building projects he had initiated on the island. Then came a late breakfast, at ten or eleven o'clock, followed by some time alone reading, bathing, and conversations with his staff. Sometime about four, Napoleon would normally go out in his calash, a light carriage, stopping to speak to any Elbans along the way who wished to petition their emperor. Returning to the

Palazzina dei Mulini by the early evening, there would be a formal audience for visitors (there was a steady stream of tourists, many from England, wanting to see for themselves this man who had held Europe in thrall for so long). Dinner was taken between six and eight, then Napoleon would play cards with his mother – who had come to Elba to share in her son's exile – or chess, before retiring between nine and ten.

For a man of the emperor's relentless energy, it's clear that the greatest danger he faced on Elba was boredom. To stave it off, Napoleon became involved in the tiniest detail of his Lilliputian realm: he organised rubbish collections, passed laws for the collection of night soil, regulated what gardeners should be paid, improved customs and excise, instituted plans to irrigate the plains of Lacona, decreed that valleys were to be reforested and olive trees planted, set up an inspectorate of roads and bridges, and decreed that no more than five children could sleep in a bed. The obsessive attention to detail that had seen Napoleon ask to see several years of the records of the laundry at the Tuileries Palace in Paris after being given a dirty napkin at dinner still drove the man. However, at some level Napoleon felt the futility of all this action poured into such a small realm, for his time on Elba was marked by an initial enthusiasm for a variety of building projects, only for him to abandon the project when faced with difficulties or the fact of his own boredom at what he was attempting to achieve.

Napoleon's difficulties were exacerbated by money worries. Under the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, the restored Bourbon King of France, Louis XVIII, was supposed to pay an annual stipend of two million francs

WIFE ABROAD

How to split an emperor from his empress and his heir

On Elba, Napoleon was joined by his mother, a sister and, for a couple of weeks, one of his mistresses. But the woman he really wanted to join him on the island, his wife, Marie Louise, never came. He had not seen her, nor their son, since 25 January 1814 but they had maintained intermittent contact by letter. With Napoleon Jr, Marie Louise had left France for Vienna, returning to her father, Emperor Francis of Austria. Napoleon certainly hoped to be reunited with Marie Louise and her letters show that at first she intended to join him in exile. But Francis and his advisors, notably Prince Metternich, subtly poisoned the rather

“HIS WIFE, MARIE LOUISE, NEVER CAME”

shallow well of Marie Louise's feelings for her husband. First, they brought her the news that Napoleon had been so grief-stricken when he heard of the death of his first wife, Joséphine, on 29 May 1814, that he had shut himself into his room for two days. Then Metternich instructed his aide, a one-eyed but handsome officer named Adam Albert von Neipperg to keep Marie Louise from going to Elba 'by any means whatsoever'. While they took the waters in spa town Aix-les-Bains, Napoleon wrote to her in ever more imperious terms that she should come to him. Marie Louise balked at this command and, returning to Vienna, she and von Neipperg became lovers, subsequently marrying and producing three children.



■ Napoleon's second wife, Marie Louise



■ The scathing cartoons that had helped to mobilise Britain against Napoleon did not stop with his exile to Elba



■ A later painting of Napoleon in exile on Elba by Leo von Klenze

FLAGGING IT

A new kingdom required a new flag, and Napoleon designed one

■ The flag that Napoleon designed

Once Napoleon arrived on Elba, he concerned himself with the minutiae of running the island, but he had already settled one outstanding item while sailing to the island: its flag. As Emperor of Elba, his new realm required a new flag and Napoleon designed it on the *Undaunted*. Ever the reader, he'd taken books on Elba with him, as well as a book showing the flags of Grand Duchy Tuscany, ancient and modern (Elba had been part of the Duchy before being given to France in 1802). The diagonal stripe echoed the flag of the House of Appiano, ancient rulers of Elba, while the bees represented Napoleon's claimed connection to the Merovingian kings of France, as golden bees were found on the tomb of Childeric I, the founder of the first French royal family, and bees often appear as symbols of Napoleon and his rule. While there's still disagreement about the exact meaning and derivation of the flag, the fact that Napoleon designed it himself is certain – and emblematic of his approach to ruling, whether it be an empire or Elba.



“RUMOURS OF ASSASSINATION THREATS MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO NAPOLEON THROUGH HIS INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS, LEAVING THE EMPEROR SO UNSETTLED THAT HE TOOK TO SLEEPING IN A DIFFERENT ROOM OF HIS PALACE EVERY NIGHT”

to Napoleon to help cover his expenses. These were considerable. Napoleon had brought to Elba a large household of staff and servants, as well as 566 soldiers to act as his bodyguards. Nor was court ceremony and excess curtailed, but rather Napoleon imposed an etiquette on what he had renamed the Palais Impérial des Mulini that resembled as closely as possible the protocols of the Tuileries Palace. Napoleon's major Elban expenses were his household and military – the administrative costs for running the household costing only ten per cent less than the military – and his income, from local taxes, excise duties, fisheries and salt mines, did not come close to matching his expenditures.

Napoleon had brought 500,000 francs with him on his journey into exile, to which nearly another three and a half million were added.

But his annual expenditure was between 1.5 and 1.8 million francs, while tax income was half that. The annual grant of two million francs from France would have bridged the financial gap, but Louis XVIII had no desire to send over a payment that he had had no part in negotiating, even if the finances of France would have allowed it. But Napoleon's wars had drained the country's financial resources; it seemed a bit much to deny others in order to subsidise the fallen emperor. Napoleon attempted to increase his income, sending troops to the town of Capoliveri when the inhabitants refused to pay their taxes, but there simply wasn't enough money in Elba to support Napoleon. Without the stipend from Louis XVIII, Napoleon would run out of money in just over two years unless he started making some drastic cuts in his imperial style. A man

with five valets could probably have reduced his expenses without too much difficulty, but that was not Napoleon's style. A reduction in his household would have reduced his imperial grandeur and for Napoleon, a man without the birth right to rule claimed by the other European rulers, the trappings of power were a necessity to reinforce the legitimacy of his place in the world – or rather at the top of it.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Financial worries were, however, not the main issue in Napoleon's decision to leave Elba. The Congress of Vienna had convened in November 1814 to decide the future shape of Europe and it soon became clear that the European powers were not prepared to leave Napoleon on Elba. Although officially cut off from communications with France and Europe, Napoleon had opened clandestine channels to bring him intelligence of the situation within France and of political developments, while the high-ranking tourists who flocked to see him on Elba were politely but thoroughly probed for the latest news. At the congress, the French foreign minister, Talleyrand, argued that Napoleon should be removed safely out of the way to one of the Azores, 1,400 kilometres from Europe, while other suggestions included St Lucia in the Caribbean and St Helena in the middle of the Atlantic.



■ Napoleon's coat of arms embossed on the wall of the Villa dei Mulini



■ The front view of what Napoleon decreed was the Palais Impérial des Mulini

■ Looking east past
Napoleon's villa to east Elba.
On a clear day, Italy is visible



Nor was it entirely clear that Napoleon would survive long enough to be moved to another, more distant, place of exile. Rumours of assassination threats made their way back to Napoleon through his intelligence channels, leaving the emperor so unsettled that he took to sleeping in a different room of his palace every night and, by the end of 1814, he only left the palace in the company of armed guards.

Meanwhile, news was filtering through to Elba that the restored Bourbon monarchy was not proving popular with the French people. While there was an element of Napoleon seeking the information he wanted to hear – that the French still loved him and would welcome him back – it was clear that Louis' restored regime was alienating some of the elements of French society that had supported Napoleon through his years in power. In particular, much of Napoleon's huge military was made redundant, and the rest put on half wages. This was a powerful constituency to alienate, particularly when ordinary soldiers generally remained loyal to the emperor, notwithstanding the way Napoleon spent their blood for his glory. The replacing of the tricolore with the white Bourbon flag antagonised Republicans, while the attempts of returning exiles to reclaim lands and possessions without recompense stoked fears of a return to the worst excesses of the ancien régime. With the Bourbons having squandered much of the political

capital that came with their restoration, Napoleon could easily convince himself that what he wanted, conditions conducive to his return to power, had come about.

What's more, by the end of December 1814, Napoleon had become so concerned about his future that he met the British representative on Elba, Colonel Sir Neil Campbell, to tell him that he would resist by force any attempt to remove him from the island. The Congress of Vienna lasted from November 1814 to June 1815, but the diplomats shaping the new Europe should perhaps have given thought to the primary impulse of the man they had left languishing on Elba: for Napoleon, always, the best form of defence was to attack.

Quite when Napoleon decided to return to France and make a renewed bid for the throne is unknown, for the decision lay in his innermost heart, which he kept apart from the public face he showed his companions. It's likely the hope of return had gone with him into exile, but by the first months of 1815, he had made the decision. When Campbell left for Italy on 16 February (to visit his doctor or his mistress, or both), the coast was clear – literally so, since Campbell had sailed aboard his ship, the HMS Partridge, that had been detailed to keep a discreet watch on the island. The same day, Napoleon ordered that his brig, *Inconstant*, be made ready with supplies and painted to resemble a British ship. The camouflage proved prescient, for a week later, the Partridge returned, anchoring

in Portoferraio harbour on the evening of 23 February. Campbell was still in Italy, but he had dispatched his boat back to Elba to check all was well, and the eagle still in his eyrie. On seeing the approach of the Partridge, Napoleon ordered the *Inconstant* out to sea, and set his soldiers to work gardening around his villa so that everything would appear as normal. On 24 February the captain of the Partridge brought some tourists ashore, checked that Napoleon was still in residence and, satisfied, weighed anchor and set sail. For a naval man, he seems to have been singularly unobservant.

The next day, Napoleon met the island's officials and told them he was leaving. The departure was set for the evening of Sunday 26 February. Napoleon left the Palais Impérial des Mulini at 7pm and crowds accompanied his carriage down to the harbour. Followed by a press of small vessels, Napoleon was rowed out to the *Inconstant* and went aboard. Alongside the brig were six other vessels. The small flotilla was carrying about 1,000 men, 40 horses and four cannons. With such an army Napoleon was going to try to win back France.

Standing on the bridge of the *Inconstant*, Napoleon looked over the sea towards France. "The die is cast," he said. The emperor was, indeed, about to make his last, desperate throw for power. Amid quiet winds, the convoy made slow progress but as the sun rose on 1 March 1815, Napoleon saw, coming over the horizon, what he had longed to see during his exile on Elba: France.

FALL OF AN EMPIRE

■ Europe had been at war for over two decades, but Napoleon's return meant that war would return until the emperor was finally defeated





THE GREAT GAMBLE

FEARFUL AND BORED ON ELBA, NAPOLEON DECIDED TO RISK EVERYTHING ON A FINAL BID TO WIN BACK FRANCE AND DEFEAT THE ALLIES



On 1 March 1815, Napoleon stepped once again on to French soil. His guard held the gangway in place so he could pass dry-shod from his boat. There was no one there to meet him. His ship, the *Inconstant*, and its small accompanying flotilla had moored at Golfe Juan, between Antibes and Cannes, in the early afternoon and the would-be emperor had come ashore in the evening, making camp in an olive grove. The aim was to get to Paris as quickly as possible, but to do so without provoking a civil war. Napoleon was basing his return on popular legitimacy, and a people that had quickly tired of the restored Bourbons. But Napoleon knew the will for his return would quickly evaporate if he brought civil strife in his wake. So he ordered his officers to go ahead, with strict instructions that no shots were to be fired. If the people did not welcome him, his return would be a failure.

But, at first, the people weren't quite sure what to do. Provence was strongly monarchist in sympathies, so rather than marching to the provincial capital, Aix-en-Provence, Napoleon took to the hills, taking the road to Grasse. The mayor of Grasse, having only five muskets in the town, surrendered. Although speed was essential, Napoleon decided to continue north on the mountain paths avoiding any centres of population until Grenoble. But to do so, he had to abandon his beloved cannons and forsake his carriage. For the long march north, the emperor made do with a mule, or walked with his troops. The Route Napoleon covers over 300 kilometres and today it's one of the great cycling routes in the world. Then, the emperor and his small party walked and rode the track through mountain pastures and plateaux, over ridges and down into ravines, covering the distance in six days.

The turning point came at Laffrey, south of Grenoble. By that time, the news that Napoleon had returned had spread and the 5th Regiment of the Line was ordered to stop him. Its commander drew his men up in battle order, their muskets at the ready. What happened next entered the Napoleonic legendarium. The returning emperor supposedly placed himself in full view of the 5th Regiment and invited them to shoot. The troops apparently threw down their guns and mobbed him, joining with Napoleon's own guards for the march to Paris. A slightly more prosaic account suggests that it was the emperor's rapid-fire questions that kept the commander of the 5th off balance until Napoleon could bring the soldiers round to his side. Whatever the exact detail, this was the first occasion during Napoleon's return that soldiers of the regular army deserted to his side and, as such, it marked a key change in his fortunes. As Napoleon himself said, "Before Grenoble I was only an adventurer. After Grenoble, I was a Prince."

THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE

Having reached Grenoble, Napoleon rested his men for 36 hours. News by now had reached Paris of the emperor's return. Louis XVIII, plagued with arthritis, received the news sitting on his couch, his legs wrapped in sheepskins. Reading the dispatch, he hid his face with his hands. But there was still hope for the restored Bourbon monarchy, and that in the redoubtable shape of Marshal Ney, one of Napoleon's most trusted and probably his bravest general. But Ney had been one of the men who had told Napoleon that his time in power was over and that he should accept exile on Elba. After the Bourbon Restoration, Ney had been accepted

THE HUNDRED DAYS

● 26 FEBRUARY 1815

ESCAPE FROM ELBA
Napoleon leaves exile on Elba aboard the ship *Inconstant*. He is attempting to regain the throne with seven ships and a thousand men.

● 1 MARCH 1815

NAPOLEON LANDS IN FRANCE
Napoleon disembarks at Golfe Juan, between Antibes and Cannes, and spends the night camped by the beach.

● 2 MARCH 1815

THE MARCH NORTH
Napoleon begins his march, heading north towards Grenoble by mountain paths and tracks.

● 7 MARCH 1815

CRISIS AT LAFFREY
Faced with soldiers of the 5th Regiment of the Line tasked with stopping him, Napoleon dares the soldiers to shoot their emperor. They join him instead.

FALL OF AN EMPIRE

by Louis XVIII as a general of the new royalist army and, hearing the news of Napoleon's return, Ney loudly proclaimed that he would apprehend the erstwhile emperor and bring him back to Paris in an iron cage.

But as Ney marched south from Paris to intercept Napoleon, he received a message from his former commander, telling him that if he would defect then Napoleon would once more receive him. With the spectre of civil war filling his mind, Ney forswore his new allegiance and returned to his old one, adding his 6,000 troops to the rapidly swelling ranks following Napoleon north on what was becoming a triumphal progress towards Paris.

With his soldiers either vacillating or deserting, Louis XVIII decided on the better part of valour. At midnight on 19 March, he left Paris, heading with his entourage north and east, into Belgium. A day later, on 20 March, Napoleon entered Paris and took up residence once again at the Tuileries. The eagle had returned and the Emperor was emperor once more. It had taken less than three weeks and not a shot had been fired. The first part of the great gamble had succeeded beyond even Napoleon's expectations. A rhyme published in Paris shortly after his return traces Napoleon's trajectory over the previous 20 days:

*The Tiger has broken out of his den
The Ogre has been three days at sea
The Wretch has landed at Fréjus
The Buzzard has reached Antibes
The Invader has arrived in Grenoble
The General has entered Lyon
Napoleon slept at Fontainebleau last night
The Emperor will proceed to the Tuileries today.
His Imperial Majesty will address his loyal
subjects tomorrow.*

But while his return might have been welcomed in France, it was greeted with considerably less delight in Vienna. There, the Congress called by the Powers to decide the shape of post-Napoleonic Europe learned that they would have to deal with Napoleon again before they got on with the business of sharing out power. However, with the representatives of Britain, Prussia, Russia and Austria all present, and refocused by the news of Napoleon's return, the bickering that had slowed the Congress over the previous few months was abruptly put aside. The time had come to "crush the ogre once and for all". Each nation agreed to provide 150,000 troops – some 600,000 in all. Napoleon himself was declared an outlaw – and the penalty for being put outside the law was death.

Desperately trying to buy some time, Napoleon sent emissaries to the Tsar and the Austrian Emperor pledging that he would

■ *Napoleon's nemesis:*
Arthur Wellesley, 1st
Duke of Wellington



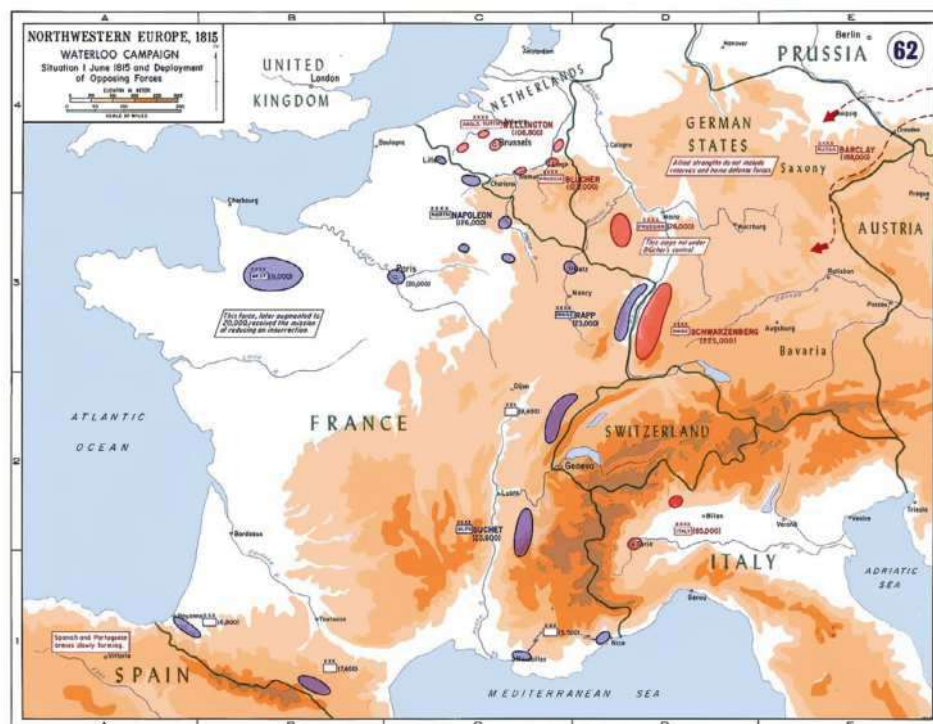
**"THE EAGLE HAD RETURNED AND
THE EMPEROR WAS EMPEROR
ONCE MORE. IT HAD TAKEN LESS
THAN THREE WEEKS AND NOT A
SHOT HAD BEEN FIRED"**

- **13 MARCH 1815**
OUTLAW EMPEROR
The participants at the Congress of Vienna, hearing of Napoleon's return, declare him an outlaw.
- **14 MARCH 1815**
NEY SWITCHES SIDES
Having promised to bring Napoleon back to Paris in an iron cage, Marshal Ney defects to the side of his erstwhile emperor, taking 6,000 troops with him.
- **17 MARCH 1815**
THE POWERS AWAKE
At the Congress of Vienna, a Seventh Coalition is formed to defeat Napoleon once and for all. Britain, Prussia, Russia and Austria each promise to contribute 150,000 men towards his defeat.
- **19 MARCH 1815**
THE KING FLEES
At midnight, Louis XVIII leaves Paris and heads north towards Belgium and a renewed exile.
- **20 MARCH 1815**
THE EAGLE RETURNS TO HIS EYRIE
Napoleon re-enters Paris and takes up residence at the Tuileries Palace. The official start of the Hundred Days.
- **4 APRIL 1815**
NAPOLEON TRIES FOR TIME
Having regained the throne, Napoleon wrote, in his own hand, to the kings of Europe promising them that he had no more wish for war. Not surprisingly, they did not believe him.



■ Marshal Ney, Napoleon's bravest general, but one whose errors contributed largely to the defeat at Waterloo

■ Below: How the armies of Europe stood at the beginning of June just before the start of the Waterloo campaign



“THE FRENCH HAD ACCEPTED THEIR OLD EMPEROR BACK BUT, WITH THE ALLIES FORMING A SEVENTH COALITION DEDICATED TO BRINGING A FINAL END TO NAPOLEON’S REGIME, A WAR-WEARY PEOPLE COULD BEGIN TO SEE THE LOOMING CLOUDS OF FRESH CONFLICT”

accept France’s new boundaries. As he asked, “Can one be as fat as I am and have ambition?” To shore up his legitimacy, Napoleon invited the people to vote on a new constitution that had been drawn up by Benjamin Constant, a former foe but a man widely respected in France. The constitution, which if it had continued promised something akin to a constitutional monarchy rather than the untrammelled dictatorial power of Napoleon’s heyday, was accepted but the turnout was much lower than in previous plebiscites. The French had accepted their old emperor back but, with the Allies forming a Seventh Coalition dedicated to bringing a final end to Napoleon’s regime, a war-weary people began to see the looming clouds of fresh conflict. In his heart, Napoleon had always known that he would only remain emperor by right of arms. With the government settled as much in his favour as possible, he set about putting the country back on to a war footing.

THE ROAD TO WATERLOO

With the Seventh Coalition ready to amass 600,000 troops against him, Napoleon was faced with a choice. He could either wait in Paris, assembling and arming his own army, and then embark upon a long war of attrition, hoping that the French would launch a guerilla war upon the lines of communication of the Allied armies as they marched into the country, as the Spanish had done during the long and bloody years of the Peninsular War. Or he could attack.

Being Napoleon, the choice was clear. But the only armies available for Napoleon to attack were those of the British and the Prussians, stationed on the north-east frontier of France in Belgium. The Austrians and the Russians were marching, but it would be weeks before they could get to France. Having won the first throw of the dice on his return, Napoleon doubled down.

- **4 APRIL 1815**
WELLINGTON RETURNS
The Duke of Wellington arrives in Brussels to take command of the Allied army.
- **13 MAY 1815**
PREPARATIONS BEGIN
Napoleon orders a secret report on the rivers and canals, and bridges, of the frontier region between France and Belgium. He is beginning to plan in earnest for his attack.
- **7 JUNE 1815**
THE BLACKOUT
Napoleon seals the border with Belgium to ensure that news of the concentration of his forces just south of the border does not leak out to the Allies.
- **14 JUNE 1815**
THE ARMY IS ASSEMBLED
Napoleon’s Armée du Nord concentrates around Beaumont in France, near the border with Belgium, ready to attack. Napoleon himself joins the army with the Imperial Guard.
- **15 JUNE 1815**
THE DIE IS CAST (AGAIN)
The French armies cross the border into Belgium and head north, aiming to separate, and separately defeat, the armies of Wellington and Blücher.
- **16 JUNE 1815**
THE BATTLE OF LIGNY
Napoleon attacks Blücher’s army at Ligny and forces it into a withdrawal, but he does not destroy it.



The Battle of Waterloo

He would attack Wellington and Blücher, and aim to win such a decisive victory that it would topple the government in Britain, putting in its place one more willing to negotiate with him, and cause such splits in the Seventh Coalition as to break it asunder. Besides, by going on to the attack, it meant that the war would not be fought on French soil.

By early May, Napoleon had made his decision. Conscription was re-imposed. The Napoleonic propaganda machine started up again, claiming that Napoleon required the service of the next cohort of young French men to protect France against the aggression of the other European powers. The material for war – munitions, horses, cannons, fodder – was prepared, but all in the conditions of strictest secrecy. For Napoleon had decided upon his grand strategy. Although, on its own, his Armée du Nord, which numbered 128,000 men, was outmatched by the two armies commanded by Wellington and Blücher (comprising 106,000 and 128,000 men respectively), Napoleon aimed to strike at the gap between the two Allied armies, keeping them apart and holding one force down with his reserves while he

“NAPOLEON HAS HUMBUGGED ME, BY GOD! HE HAS GAINED TWENTY-FOUR HOURS MARCH”

defeated the other, before turning all his strength upon the remaining army. This was Napoleon’s strategy of the central position and he had used it with great success in the past. Besides, he was well aware that the battle-hardened troops Wellington had led to victory in the Peninsular War had been dispatched to America to fight in the War of 1812, leaving Wellington in command of a mixed Anglo-Dutch army of unproven worth. As for General Blücher, Napoleon regarded him as nothing more than a hussar, that is a dunderhead cavalryman with as much subtlety as a cannonball.

From the excellent intelligence he had received from supporters in Belgium, Napoleon knew that Wellington’s and Blücher’s armies were quite widely spread. More importantly, he had also established that each army’s lines of communication ran in different directions: Wellington’s north to the Channel ports, Blücher’s east to Liège and the Rhine. Any army making a withdrawal will tend to do so along its lines of communication, which meant that any defeat he inflicted on either Wellington or Blücher would have the effect of driving the two Allied armies further apart – exactly what he was aiming to do.

But for this strategy to work, Napoleon needed to fool the enemy as to his intentions and, for this, conditions of strictest secrecy were necessary. From 7 June, he sealed France’s north-eastern frontier, stopping the post, closing the border to travellers and preventing fishing boats leaving French ports. Under cover of this

intelligence blackout, Napoleon concentrated his forces near the border by 14 June, while the garrisons at Dunkirk and Lille made feints to suggest an attack on Ostend, thus drawing Wellington back towards the Channel to guard his rear. The first part of Napoleon’s strategy had been a success. Now it was time to strike.

THE BATTLES BEGIN

On 15 June, the French attacked. The Armée du Nord marched into Belgium. As news filtered through to Wellington and Blücher, they both made grave tactical errors. Blücher ordered his army to concentrate at Sombreffe, although this position was near the already assembled main French forces, leaving the Prussians vulnerable to being destroyed before they could properly deploy. As for Wellington, he was completely fooled by the feint towards Ostend and his first orders were for his army to cover his lines of communication, thus drawing further away from Blücher, the target of Napoleon’s intended first blow. The Allies had made two grave errors before battle had even begun. Napoleon normally only needed one.

However, an even greater objective had been within Napoleon’s grasp. Marshal Ney, advancing north on the road towards Brussels, came to the village of Quatre Bras, which controlled the east-west road connecting Wellington and Blücher’s armies. Unbeknown to him, Quatre Bras was held by just 4,000

16 JUNE 1815

THE BATTLE OF QUATRE BRAS

Marshal Ney, leading the left wing of the French advance, attacks Wellington’s army at Quatre Bras but is unable to take the village.

17 JUNE 1815

RETREAT AND REDEPLOYMENT

Fearful of being outflanked, Wellington extricates his army from Quatre Bras. He takes up a new position at Mont-Saint-Jean, south of a village called Waterloo.

17 JUNE 1815

BLÜCHER’S PROMISE

General Blücher retreats north, maintaining contact with Wellington’s army, and gives his word that he will send reinforcements for the battle the next day.

18 JUNE 1815

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

The climactic battle of the Napoleonic Wars is, as Wellington later admitted, “the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life”.

18 JUNE 1815

THE BATTLE OF WAVRE

The French right wing attempts to stop the Prussian Army joining with Wellington. Although the French win the tactical victory, they are unable to prevent Blücher sending Wellington the reinforcements that turned the Battle of Waterloo.



■ The leader of the Prussian army, General Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher

men, whereas Ney had 50,000 under his command. However, fearful of Wellington's ability to hide troops behind cover, Ney stopped outside Quatre Bras for the night rather than attempting to take it. The Allied officer holding Quatre Bras had, in fact, directly disobeyed Wellington's order to withdraw to the north-east when he saw Ney approaching, reasoning that he was in possession of more information than headquarters. This decision, by Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, was to prove crucial.

In Brussels, Wellington was attending the Duchess of Richmond's ball when news of the whereabouts of the French army finally reached him in the early hours of 16 June. The realisation was sudden. "Napoleon has humbugged me, by God! He has gained twenty-four hours march on me." When asked what he intended to do, Wellington said, "I have ordered the army to concentrate on Quatre Bras; but we shall not stop him there, and if so, I must fight him here." The Duke pointed to the map, just south of a village called Waterloo.

As for Blücher, by noon of 16 June he had assembled his army along the line of the Ligny Brook over an 11-kilometre front. Wellington rode to meet Blücher there and promised to send reinforcements if he was not attacked himself. But for Napoleon, seeing the Prussian army drawn up in ranks on the far side of the Ligny Brook was an irresistible invitation to attack. At 2.30pm on 16 June, he gave the order. At about the same time, 11 kilometres

to the east at Quatre Bras, Marshal Ney finally launched his attack on the village, to which Wellington had been rushing reinforcements through the night and morning.

Thus two battles, at Ligny and Quatre Bras, began almost simultaneously, with Napoleon fighting Blücher at Ligny and Ney attempting to defeat Wellington at Quatre Bras. Not knowing that further troops had reinforced the Allied position at Quatre Bras, Napoleon was expecting a swift victory by Ney and for the marshal to then march east and deliver the coup de grâce to Blücher's army by attacking its flank. But with Wellington pouring troops into Quatre Bras, and leading the defence himself, Ney made no headway. If Napoleon was to defeat Blücher's army and then turn on Wellington, he would have to win the victory with the troops available to him.

He nearly did. By 7pm the Prussian army had been badly mauled and Blücher ordered it to retreat, personally leading a cavalry charge to buy his retreating army time. In that charge, Blücher's horse was killed and the Prussian general was pinned under it, while waves of French cavalry swirled around him, with only one aide staying by his side. It was only when the battle moved away that the aide managed to free his general and take Blücher to safety.

However, Blücher's attack had bought his army time, allowing it to retreat in reasonably good order. Napoleon had won a victory, but not a crushing one. When Blücher eventually made it back to his headquarters he countermanded suggestions that the Prussians should withdraw to the east, saying that honour required they continue to support Wellington. This was to prove the single most important decision of the entire campaign.

Hearing of the Prussian withdrawal, Wellington realised that his own position at Quatre Bras was untenable. He had to withdraw, but to where? Wellington sent a messenger to Blücher, saying he would stand and fight at Mont-Saint-Jean if Blücher could promise to send him reinforcements. Receiving this message, Blücher gave his word: he would not let Wellington down. So, throughout the day of 17 June, Wellington drew his troops back from Quatre Bras to take up their new positions at the site he had selected for battle, while Napoleon's troops advanced through an apocalyptic thunderstorm.

As the sun set on 17 June, all the elements were drawing into place for the climactic battle of the Napoleonic Wars. As for Napoleon, little did he know that he would soon go from emperor to adage, for on the morrow he would meet his Waterloo.

- **21 JUNE 1815**
NAPOLEON IN PARIS
Napoleon arrives in Paris and attempts to rally his men but political support is draining away from him.
- **22 JUNE 1815**
THE EMPEROR ABDICATES
Napoleon abdicates for the second time in favour of his four-year-old son.
- **29 JUNE 1815**
NAPOLEON FLEES
Napoleon and his entourage leave Paris, heading westwards, with possible plans to sail to America.
- **3 JULY 1815**
CEASEFIRE
The French sue for a ceasefire following the defeat of a French army at the Battle of Issy.
- **8 JULY 1815**
THE BOURBONS ARE BACK
Louis XVIII is restored as king of France. The official end of the Hundred Days.
- **15 JULY 1815**
NAPOLEON SURRENDERS
Napoleon hands himself over to the captain of HMS Bellerophon, hoping that the British will prove more clement to him than the Prussians (Blücher wanted to hang Napoleon).
- **16 OCTOBER 1815**
ST HELENA
Napoleon finds that British clemency means exile in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. This is an exile from which he will not return.

FALL OF AN EMPIRE

WATERLOO

MORE THAN 200 YEARS ON FROM THIS CLASH OF NATIONS, EXPLORE THE DECISIONS, THE ARMIES, AND EVERY INCH OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS BATTLEFIELD





As dawn broke on 18 June 1815, thousands of soldiers from nearly every corner of Europe slowly emerged from their rain-soaked bivouacs and looked out across the small patch of Belgian farmland they found themselves in. Men in the French, Prussian and Anglo-Dutch camps knew what an almighty clash of arms the day would bring, but few could have foreseen the slaughter to come. As orders rang out to fall in, many must have feared they would not see the day's end.

The Battle of Waterloo was a final, brutal fullstop to what was known up until the 20th century as the Great War. Between 1803 and 1815 nearly every European nation threw its full weight into the series of conflicts more commonly known as the Napoleonic Wars. Waterloo would not only decide the fate of a resurgent Napoleon, but also of the nations of Europe lined up against him. For Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, and Gebhard von Blücher, Prussia's aging but experienced field marshal, the stakes couldn't have been higher – Europe's destiny was in their hands.



THE HUNDRED DAYS CAMPAIGN

Returned from exile, Napoleon quickly retook his imperial throne and mustered those loyal to him to march against Europe

On 29 February 1815, Napoleon landed at Golfe-Juan, south France, with just 1,000 men after escaping exile on the island of Elba. Less than a month later and he was entering Paris, the ranks of his army swelling with nearly every soldier the Bourbon king Louis XVIII sent to apprehend him. This began what historians would later call the Hundred Days – Napoleon's final campaign to cling to power.

Just a week previous, representatives of the great European powers had declared the former emperor an outlaw. By returning from his lawful exile, they claimed he "has placed himself without the pale of civil and social relations... and has rendered himself liable to public vengeance." Gathered at the Congress of Vienna, delegates from Great Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia immediately pledged armies to support the authority of the Bourbon monarch and defeat Napoleon. These powers would form the backbone of the Seventh Coalition, the clenched fist poised to strike Napoleon down.



On his return from Elba, Napoleon was received positively by the army and much of the French population

After weeks of desperate negotiation, attempting to compromise France's position as well as his own, Napoleon realised that war was inevitable. With Anglo-Prussian forces gathering near Brussels, the emperor chose to take the fight to the allies in a bid to defeat them consecutively and broker a better deal for himself and for his country. While the

coalition made its own plans to invade France in July, Napoleon took the initiative on 15 June by invading what is now Belgium. He had to move fast to drive a wedge between the Duke of Wellington's British, Dutch and Hanoverian army and Count von Blücher's Prussian force, the combination of which greatly outnumbered his own Armée du Nord.

"WHILE THE COALITION MADE ITS OWN PLANS TO INVADE FRANCE IN JULY, NAPOLEON TOOK THE INITIATIVE ON 15 JUNE BY INVADING MODERN-DAY BELGIUM"





THE MARCH TO WATERLOO

Encamped in and around Brussels, Wellington and his staff received continuous reports of rumoured French attacks across the border to the south; they were nearly all incorrect. On 15 June, confirmed reports of the French invasion reached the British command and by evening, the night of the now-famous Duchess of Richmond's Ball, the army was marching south.

Meeting the Armée du Nord commanded by Marshal Ney at Quatre Bras, Wellington's men came under immense pressure

but managed to block the French advance along the road to Brussels. Blücher's army, meanwhile, was forced to retreat from Ligny by a much larger force under the command of Napoleon.

With Marshal Grouchy pursuing the Prussians north, Napoleon gathered his main force and continued after Wellington, who encamped his army at Mont St Jean just south of Waterloo village. It was here that the British general decided he would make his stand, in the hope his Prussian ally could reach him in time.



■ British troops fighting in square formation at the Battle of Quatre Bras

WATERLOO'S LEADERS

The duke and the emperor's decision makers

HENRY PAGET, 2ND EARL OF UXBRIDGE GREAT BRITAIN



A talented cavalry officer, Uxbridge was given command of the allied horse at Waterloo, with

carte blanche from Wellington to take action without orders if an opportunity presented itself.

HRH WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS



Still in his early 20s and with little practical command experience, William was nonetheless given a senior commission in the British

Army, commanding the I Corps of Wellington's army at both Quatre Bras and Waterloo.

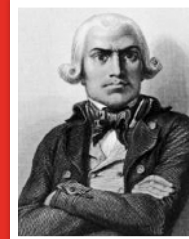
FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON BÜLOW KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA



Commanding the Prussian IV Corps at the battle, the count was a veteran of the successful campaigns in France that led to

Napoleon's first exile. He had also previously defeated Marshal Ney at the Battle of Dennewitz.

JEAN-BAPTISTE DROUET, COMTE D'ERLON FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE



In command of Napoleon's I Corps during the battle, d'Erlon was considered to be a veteran soldier with more than 20 years' experience of

battlefields, stretching as far back as the Revolutionary Wars in 1792.

SIR THOMAS PICTON GREAT BRITAIN



A veteran of Wellington's Peninsular War and a ruthless leader, Picton commanded the allied reserve.

Before the battle of 18 June, it is said he had a premonition he would not live to return to his native Wales. He didn't.

JEROME BONAPARTE FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE



During the battle, Napoleon's younger brother, previously crowned the king of Westphalia, was

tasked primarily with distracting Wellington through an attack against Hougomont, on the coalition army's right flank.

SIR JAMES KEMPT GREAT BRITAIN



Returning from fighting in the War of 1812 with the United States of America, Kempt was placed in charge of the British

8th Brigade, which included the 1st Battalion of the 95th Rifles.

MARSHAL MICHEL NEY FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE



Having fought beside Napoleon before his exile, in 1815 Ney marched under the orders of Louis XVIII to apprehend

the former emperor after his return from Elba, but joined him instead and served as his marshal once more.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Napoleon and Wellington's armies come face to face on a Belgian field that resembles a sea of mud

With the pouring rain dripping off their brows and their boots squelching in the thick Belgian mud, the morale of the soldiers of the Seventh Coalition was at a low ebb. The downpour on the night of Saturday 17 June was relentless, as the shivering and soaked troops sat on a ridge along the road to Brussels. Wellington may have had a warm bed in a nearby inn that night, but his mind could not shake the thought that just three miles south was Napoleon and his Grande Armée, and they would soon be on their way.

Wellington positioned his forces on the north-facing slope of the ridge near Mont St Jean, in a bid to shield the majority of his men from the inevitable barrage of the French guns. At the foot of the south-facing slope, three buildings lined his position facing the French advance: the manor of Hougoumont, as well as the farmhouses of Papelotte and La Haye Sainte. The latter of these lay in the centre of Wellington's line, making it a crucial position to hold to stop Napoleon's advance. Likewise, Hougoumont presented a vital position for defending the right flank of the coalition army. While Coldstream Guards and Nassau German infantry were garrisoned to defend Hougoumont, La Haye Sainte was manned by about 400 men from the King's German Legion, under Major Georg Baring.

Though he knew these defences were sturdy enough, Wellington was counting on Blücher's Prussian forces to arrive. On the morning of 18 June, they were still some miles east, pursued by Marshal Grouchy. After the ground had dried sufficiently to allow his artillery to be deployed,

Napoleon set his plans into motion. The emperor aimed to break through Wellington's centre, take the ridge and split his force. Seeing the advance of the French troops, Wellington instructed his men to avoid the inevitable artillery barrage and lay down in the sodden grass. Horizontal on the ground, the allied troops said their prayers and awaited the sound of French cannon.

■ *Right: The King's German Legion was made up of some of the finest soldiers in the coalition and had uniforms to match. Though dressed like their British counterparts, their orders of command were made in German*

■ *Below: La Haye Sainte was one of Wellington's key defensive points at Waterloo. It held out for far longer than many anticipated and stunted Napoleon's advance*



“THE ALLIED TROOPS SAID THEIR PRAYERS AND AWAITED THE SOUND OF FRENCH CANNON”

“THE ENTIRE PLAN DEPENDED ON WELLINGTON AND THE PRUSSAINS WORKING TOGETHER”

Historian and broadcaster Dan Snow on the makeup of Wellington's forces and his plans for taking on Napoleon

WHY DID WELLINGTON CHOOSE TO FIGHT NEAR WATERLOO? WHAT ADVANTAGES DID HE HOLD?

Waterloo sits bang alongside the road from Charleroi to Brussels. Wellington identified Mont St Jean as where he could make a good defence of Brussels. It was harder to attack up a ridge and he could hide his troops behind the fold in the ground. This

was one of Wellington's favourite tricks – to shelter from cannon fire. Wellington had recced the area extensively before, and if he couldn't hold them at Quatre Bras, he could hold them at Waterloo.

WHAT TROOPS DID WELLINGTON HAVE TO CALL ON FOR THE BATTLE?

Wellington was very dismissive of his own army. He said he had a very poor army that was ill equipped. Many of the troops were newly raised levies because the allied states had only come back into existence a few months before, so an army of untrained and unproven officers had to be rebuilt. These troops may well have found themselves fighting for Napoleon a few years before, as many

of the German states had previously been under French control. Belgium and the Netherlands had just been reconstituted after a time as Napoleonic client states ruled over by Bonapartists. The army was unreliable and uncertain in its loyalty.

WERE THE COALITION COMMANDERS UNITED? WAS THERE ANY DISAGREEMENT OVER TACTICS AND DECISIONS?

The big issue was getting the relationship right between the coalition leaders. The entire plan depended on Wellington and the Prussians working together. Alone, he probably wasn't strong enough to deal with the entire might of Napoleon's army. Allied with the Prussians, he probably would be.

Our continental allies have always been very suspicious of us Brits and in 1815, the minute Napoleon crossed the border, everyone thought



DEPLOYMENT

In a matter of hours, more than 100,000 men would engage in a battle that would settle the fate of Europe for at least a century

ASSEMBLY OF THE GRANDE BATTERIE

Despite being hastily assembled weeks earlier, the troops of the Grande Armée counted many veterans among their ranks and morale remained high. Artillery was set up in the centre of the French ranks so to concentrate fire on the enemy lines - a tactic pioneered by Napoleon.

THE ALLIED COALITION

Outnumbered and outgunned, with many seasoned British troops still station in North America. Those left would be ably assisted by allies from Brunswick and Hanover, and militia from several other Dutch and German principalities. Last, Wellington had the trusty 95th Rifles Regiment.

MONT ST JEAN

At the heart of the allied ranks, this acted as a field hospital during the battle. After the overnight rain, the battlefield had become a swamp and Napoleon's artillery would do well to make it all the way here.



Map taken from *The Battle of Waterloo Experience* by Peter & Dan Snow, published by Andre Deutsch

SECURING HOUGOUMONT

This farmhouse would become a key outpost during the battle. Wellington reached it first and deployed a selection of companies from Nassau and Hanover as well as the Coldstream Guards. With their backs to the wall, the allies were commanded to defend Hougoumont to the very last man.

PAPELOTTE AND THE EASTERN ROAD

Casting his eyes to the left, Wellington watched the small hamlet of Papelotte nervously. If the Prussians were ever going to arrive, this is where they would show up. He and Blücher had a pact, but would they have regrouped in time after their tactical loss to the French at Ligny?

LA HAYE SAINTE

The farm here was made into a sturdy and well-defended compound by the King's German Legion. One of the best units in the allied army, it was made up of Hessians and Hanoverians who had ample experience fighting in the name of Britain.

the British would head off on their ships back to Blighty. A key moment was when Wellington promised Blücher that he would stand and fight. There was a disagreement in the Prussian high command about whether Wellington was a man of his word, but thankfully Blücher believed him and sent a corps or two of infantry to help swing the battle in Wellington's favour.

WHAT DID THE ALLIES KNOW ABOUT NAPOLEON'S ARMY?

The allies would have made estimates about how many men Napoleon could call on. He had a large pool of veterans to summon but they were unsure how many Napoleon would send to his

■ A mainstay of the British Army since 1812, the Belgic shako replaced the stovepipe shako. Lace was silver or gold for officers, depending on regulations.



“OUR CONTINENTAL ALLIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY SUSPICIOUS OF US BRITS”

northern army and how many would be kept in reserve. In fact, Napoleon had gone north with 130,000 men, a bolder move than the allies were expecting. Napoleon had very successfully cut all communication and no news had filtered out since he left Paris. The allies didn't know where and when Napoleon was going to cross the border or with how many men.

WHAT MUST MORALE HAVE BEEN LIKE IN THE RANKS ON THE MORNING OF THE BATTLE?

Morale wasn't great. Wellington's men had spent a night in the pouring rain while sleeping on the ground. Their clothes were sticking to them, they were freezing cold and looking forward to a bed

in Brussels. There was a lot of uncertainty and general misery caused by the driving rain. We struggle to remember now, with our waterproof clothes, that these guys in their broadcloth and wool had uniform that shrunk when they got wet.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO?

I think probably Wellington's left surviving and stabilising its lines after the first massive attack by d'Erlon. On the eastern half of the battlefield, Napoleon feinted to his left and launched a hammer blow on Hougoumont to draw British attention to the west, because of course the British were worried about the west as it was their route to sea and the protective embrace of the Royal Navy. The British left wing was driven back but Uxbridge identified that the heavy cavalry was required to break up the French attack, and they did so very effectively. This allowed Wellington to maintain his defensive posture and wait for nightfall and the Prussians.

FROM HOUGOUMONT TO THE BRITISH CAVALRY CHARGE

As cannons blazed and infantry clashed, it was left to the coalition heavy cavalry to ride in and salvage the afternoon for Wellington

It had been a long time since Austerlitz, but the fire in Napoleon's belly was still strong as he rode up and down his ranks to cries of "vive l'empereur!" Hidden behind the brow of the ridge, Wellington's men waited for the inevitable artillery bombardment, while those garrisoned in the farm houses in front of the slope knew they would bear the brunt of the French attack.

Intended as a diversion while the main artillery pummelled the centre, Napoleon instructed his brother, Jerome, to lead an infantry division to Hougoumont. Scaling the compound, they smashed through the gate but were cut down in the close confines of the farmyard. This tussle for Hougoumont raged on for hours, and the diversion became a key part of the battle. Back in the centre, Napoleon believed that the artillery attack had gone on long enough, and sent in his infantry led by d'Erlon. The French general had faced Wellington before in the Peninsular War and was determined to have the better of him this time around. His assault began well, as he took La Haye Sainte and forced a retreat.

As the French moved further forward, they engaged the core of the coalition forces. Wellington's line was thinly spread and Napoleon hoped that this forward punch would split the allied forces and clear the way to Brussels. The French had the upper hand, but they hadn't counted on a mass counterattack led by the Earl of Uxbridge's heavy cavalry. 2,000 horses clashed with the infantry and sent them running back. The sudden and effective strike had evened up the battle but, as Napoleon readied his artillery and his own cavalry, the pendulum was about to swing again.

■ In warfare from this era, fighting for and winning the enemy standard was a major part of the conflict, able to boost or decimate morale depending on which side seized the standard and which side lost it.



1 THE HOUGOUMONT FARMHOUSE

Napoleon's first objective is to take the small compound at Hougoumont. Lightly defended by only a few allied companies, a mass infantry attack is repulsed just as the men in the courtyard near breaking point.

2 THE MAIN ASSAULT

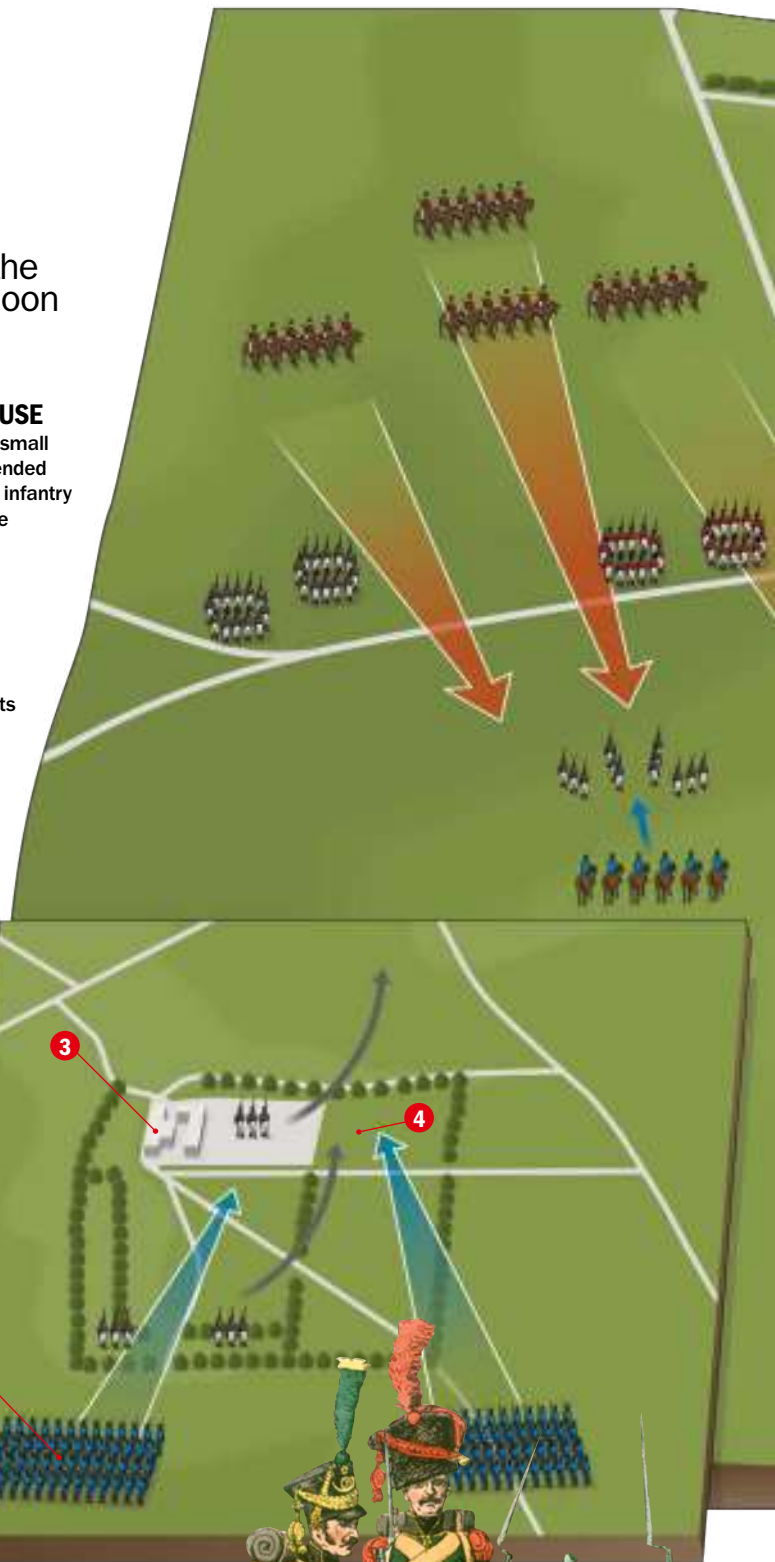
The Grande Batterie lines up in the middle of the field and fires countless bursts of round shots at the opposing ranks. The relentless bombardment lasts for two hours and the allied lines are peppered with cannon shot.

3 THE DIVERSION BECOMES A MASS BATTLE

The French army is determined to take Hougoumont. It believes that if they do, Wellington's reserves will be drawn towards it and leave his centre exposed. Napoleon's brother Jerome commands the attack on the farmhouse; he is eager to prove his worth.

4 RESOLUTE COALITION DEFENCE

The two-metre wall that surrounds the compound is stubbornly defended by the British, who fire their muskets and rifles through any gaps in the wall they can find. Despite wave after wave of Frenchmen, Hougoumont is still in allied hands.

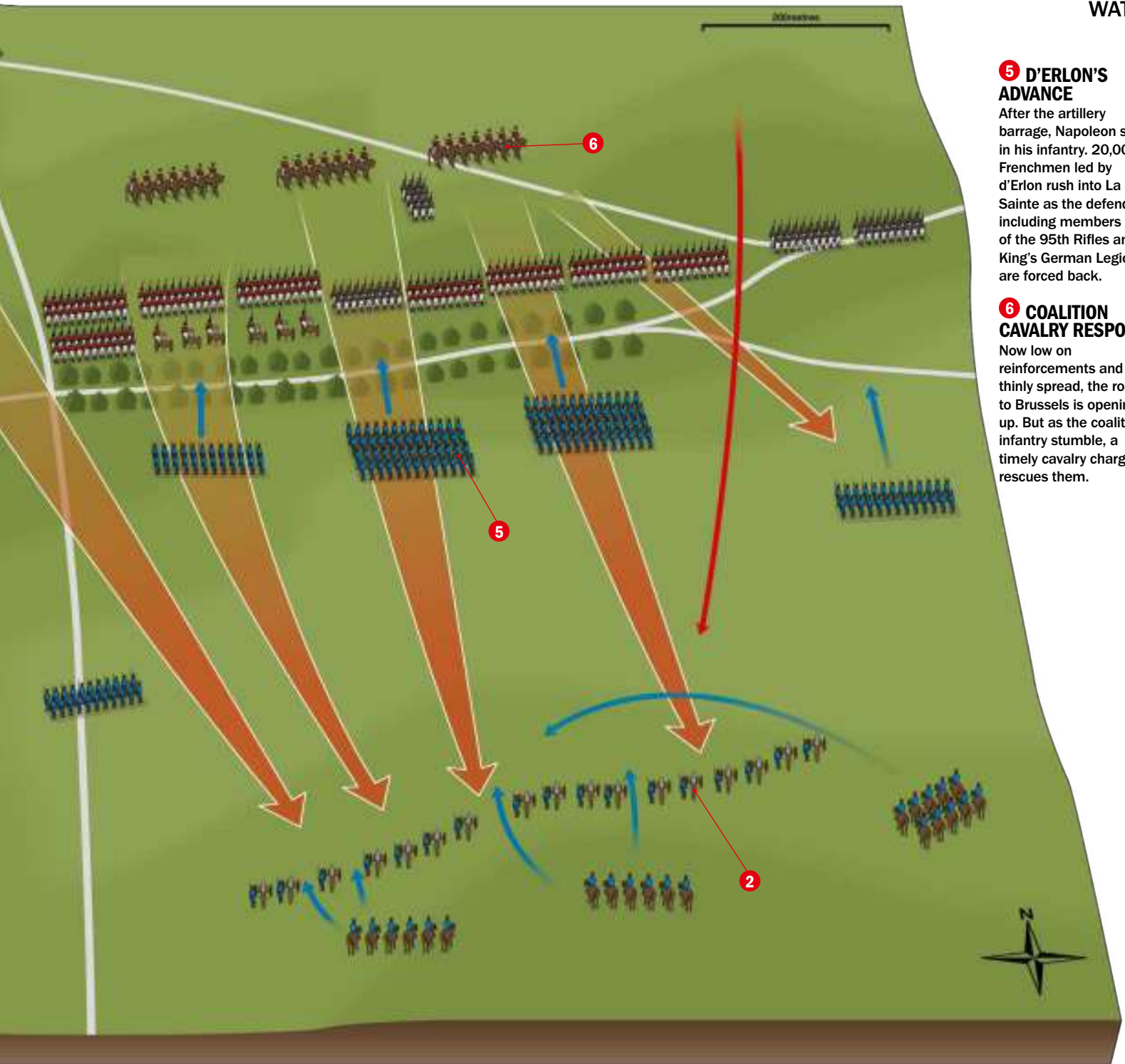


INFANTRY SKIRMISHERS

The coalition forces were bolstered by specialised troops, able to fight and move more independently

Waterloo wasn't the only concern for the British in the summer of 1815. They had only recently been fighting in the War of 1812 and, as a result, some of the best units in the army were still stranded in the United States.





5 D'ERLON'S ADVANCE

After the artillery barrage, Napoleon sends in his infantry. 20,000 Frenchmen led by d'Erlon rush into La Haye Sainte as the defenders, including members of the 95th Rifles and King's German Legion, are forced back.

6 COALITION CAVALRY RESPONSE

Now low on reinforcements and thinly spread, the road to Brussels is opening up. But as the coalition infantry stumble, a timely cavalry charge rescues them.

Acute Graphics



■ Above: A British pattern Baker Rifle 1805. These rifles were far more accurate than standard-issue muskets and were favourites of light infantry skirmishers

To fill the gaps left by them, the coalition utilised the use of mercenary units from several German states. These troops, most from Brunswick, Nassau and Hanover, had served the British with distinction in the Peninsular War and had signed up once

■ Left: Light infantry from the German city state of Nassau. During the battle, Nassau infantry were stationed in Hougoumont alongside British Guardsmen

again to fight against the First French Empire. The majority of the 95th Rifles Regiment also served at Waterloo. These jaegers and skirmishers were Wellington's trump card. Wielding Baker Rifles rather than smoothbore muskets, these elite corps would fight in open order and were among some of the best marksmen of the era. Napoleon was always slightly hesitant to employ rifled battalions and still believed the faster-to-reload musket was king, so the Grande Armée only had one regiment of Tirailleur skirmishers in its ranks. The British tactic of laying low behind ridges and

in farmhouses favoured the use of accurate marksmen; they were the eyes and ears of the allied army. Using cover, they harassed the flanks of the French columns to great success. The defence of Hougoumont, La Haye Sainte and Papelotte was greatly aided by the Nassau regiments and the King's German Legion.

Supplementing the British guard, the stoicism of these battalions helped hold the French infantry back and they only stopped fighting when they ran out of ammunition. For many, the victory was as much German as it was British.

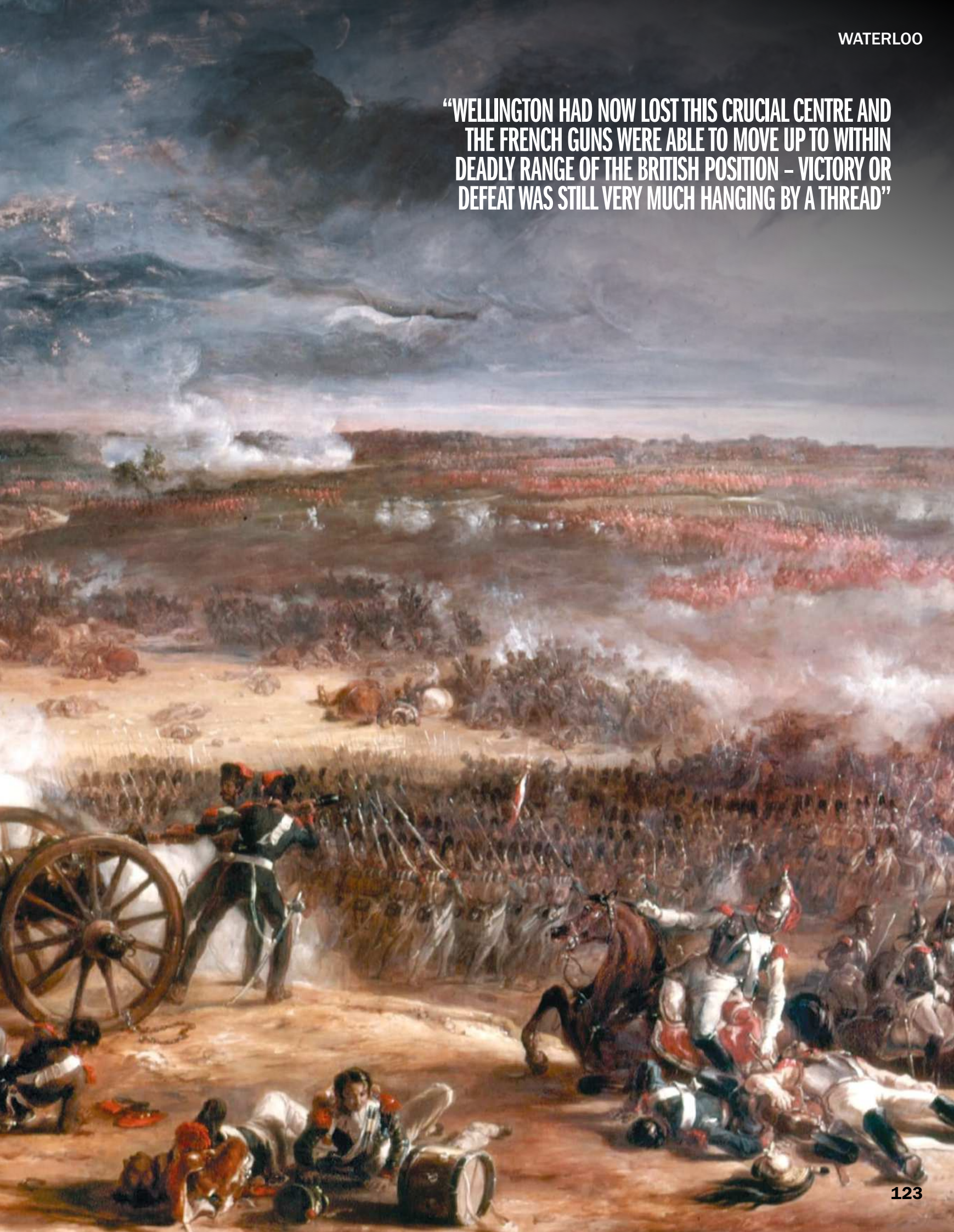
WATERLOO IN 100 OBJECTS

Waterloo In 100 Objects by Gareth Glover is available from The History Press and features just a few of the fantastic artefacts seen here. Visit www.thehistorypress.co.uk for more information.

■ The scale of the conflict can be seen in this oil on canvas painting of the Battle of Waterloo by Sir William Allan



**“WELLINGTON HAD NOW LOST THIS CRUCIAL CENTRE AND
THE FRENCH GUNS WERE ABLE TO MOVE UP TO WITHIN
DEADLY RANGE OF THE BRITISH POSITION – VICTORY OR
DEFEAT WAS STILL VERY MUCH HANGING BY A THREAD”**



WATERLOO'S CAVALRY

Courageous charges and lethal manoeuvres turned the tide of the battle more than once

With Uxbridge's cavalry sweeping across the battlefield, many over-running towards the French lines, the French cuirassiers, considered the elite heavy cavalry of the day, prepared their counter-charge. The result was catastrophic for the British mounted troops, who were utterly destroyed by the fresh French cavalry. Many found themselves pursued as they desperately spurred on their

■ Below: A shako cap belonging to a member of the Brunswick Hussars. The skull and cross bones was a symbol of mourning for the late Duke of Brunswick



spent horses towards friendly lines, but were cut down either by sabres or lethally effective lances. More than once during the day it was the French lancers who got the best of their British rivals in one-on-one combat, with the weapon's extra reach providing a devastating advantage.

After this exchange of slaughter, with the remnants of the British cavalry gathering back behind its own lines and d'Erlon still attempting to rally his scattered men, a lull broke out across the battlefield as both sides took stock. Further to the west the fight for Hougoumont still raged, with infantry and artillery attacks battering the building relentlessly.

At about 4pm, Marshal Ney gathered his cavalry together and prepared them to charge up and over the hill. The German garrison of La Haye Sainte would have seen the terrifying cuirassiers and Chasseurs a Cheval speed past on their way up the ridge. Nervously taking stock of their dwindling ammunition, they knew they could not hold this crucial position much longer without support. As the gleaming armour of the French appeared on top of the ridge, Wellington bellowed to his men: "Prepare to receive cavalry!"

"THE RESULT WAS CATASTROPHIC FOR THE BRITISH MOUNTED TROOPS, WHO WERE UTTERLY DESTROYED BY THE FRESH FRENCH CAVALRY"

■ Right: The cuirass breastplate of Carabiner Francois Fauveau, who was killed when a cannonball struck him in the chest, passing straight through the young man's body



UXBRIDGE'S CHARGE

How the British cavalry swept away the French advantage

With d'Erlon's infantry mounting the ridge ahead of the coalition position, Sir Thomas Picton attacked the fatigued French with his own reserve units. Wellington's entire centre was in danger of folding under the sheer mass of 20,000 infantrymen in columns. Uxbridge, seeing the danger, moved his entire cavalry corps forward into line and ordered the charge. The Household and Union brigades, numbering about 2,000 sabres, charged at quick pace, rather than an outright gallop, through the British lines and into d'Erlon's men.

The French infantry were completely routed, with the troops scattering frantically back down the ridge towards their lines. Hundreds were killed as they ran and hundreds more surrendered or played dead. The charge of the Scots Greys was

simultaneously one of the most successful and tragic of the whole engagement. Crashing into the French 45th line, Sergeant Charles Ewart of the 2nd Dragoons captured an imperial eagle, the symbol of the regiment. Only two such prizes were taken in this way during the battle.

Drunk with the success of their charge, however, the dragoons and many others in Uxbridge's charge continued on towards the French guns on the opposite slope. With their horses winded and cut off from any infantry support, a counterattack by French cuirassiers devastated the British cavalry, which descended into panic and became scattered in the mud and chaos. Only a fraction of the coalition cavalry remained and would take no further significant part in the battle.

"HUNDREDS WERE KILLED AS THEY RAN AND HUNDREDS MORE SURRENDERED OR PLAYED DEAD"





"CAVALRY PROVIDED THE EYES AND EARS"

Professor Bruno Colson on cavalry tactics and how a well-timed charge could prove the difference between victory and catastrophe

WHAT WERE THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COALITION CAVALRY AND FRENCH CAVALRY?

The British cavalry had two components: the Household regiments, with heavy men on heavy horses, and the dragoons regiments, with dragoon guards and heavy and light dragoons. Hanoverian, Dutch-Belgian and Brunswick units included a majority of light regiments but also some heavy (carabineer) regiments. No cavalry wore armour or carried lances in Wellington's army at Waterloo.

The French had more types of cavalymen, equally divided into heavy and light regiments. The most numerous were the cuirassiers regiments: elite troops on powerful horses. They had longer swords than their British counterparts and this proved deadly at Waterloo. The Prussians had no heavy cavalry and a majority of their regiments came from the militia (Landwehr). A lot of them were armed with lances.

The British system had only one officer in front, the others being within the ranks. This was not conducive to forward control and was one reason the British Union Brigade was not able to rally after dispersing d'Erlon's French Infantry. In the French and Prussian cavalries, five officers were out in front, guiding the direction and speed of their men.

WERE FRENCH CAVALRY OFFICERS GIVEN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FREEDOM IN THE RANKS?

At Waterloo, Marshal Ney was put in command of the attacks by Napoleon, so he was authorised to launch his great cavalry charges around 4pm, even if the emperor judged it was premature.

The French were the first to have a strong cavalry reserve. Some said this hampered cooperation with infantry. There were instances in the Waterloo campaign when a French infantry general didn't want to obey a cavalry general. This happened quite frequently, pointing to jealousy and mistrust between cavalry and infantry.

WHAT ROLES DID CAVALRY UNITS HAVE OFF THE BATTLEFIELD?

Light cavalry provided the eyes and ears of the army, on the move and on the battlefield. It was used to reconnoitre, patrol, screen, skirmish, provide outposts and seek intelligence. Napoleon formally prohibited the use of cuirassiers for such tasks – too heavy and too expensive. They were reserved for shock actions on the battlefield.

HOW WERE CAVALRY UNITS ABLE TO CO-ORDINATE WITH INFANTRY UNITS EFFECTIVELY ON THE BATTLEFIELD?

Like the infantry, cavalry units normally achieved their best results in combination with guns. It also had to be supported by infantry to be able to hold ground it conquered. Artillery and infantry followed the horsemen and plunged into the breach created.

Such a co-ordinated attack was brilliantly orchestrated by the French at the Battle of Ligny. At Waterloo, however, this co-ordination was badly organised by the French. Ney's famous cavalry charges were not followed by infantry.

On the allied side, as his posture was defensive, the Duke of Wellington removed most of his Royal Horse Artillery batteries from his cavalry formations to place them in a static role. Uxbridge's charge was timely in relieving the Anglo-allied infantry.

HOW DID NAPOLEON DEPLOY HIS CAVALRY IN ORDER TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THEIR ABILITIES?

Napoleon really put the emphasis on his heavy cavalry and used it as a reserve force able to exploit every opportunity to break the enemy front during a battle and to pursue a broken adversary. For that purpose he had massive formations of cuirassiers, from 3,000 to 10,000.

The emperor also had a 'master of the cavalry' able to lead this massive force into battle. The allies didn't launch such massive cavalry charges.

HOW WAS THE INFANTRY SQUARE FORMATION DEVELOPED TO TAKE ON CAVALRY, HOW EFFECTIVE WAS IT, AND WHAT DID CAVALRY UNITS DO IN ORDER TO TRY TO BREAK SQUARE FORMATIONS?

At Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington had formed his infantry battalions in small columns able to quickly form into squares. Actually, most of them were oblong squares. They were four ranks deep and not a single one was penetrated by French cavalry.

The only hope for the cavalymen to break a square was to exploit a gap generally easier to find at an angle. Once horsemen got inside a square it was all over for the infantry, but this did not happen at Waterloo.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO?

For me, this was when the French I Corps reached the crest of Mont St Jean and was in position to break the Anglo-allied centre, around 2pm. This was the moment when Napoleon could have won the battle.

The counterattack by Picton's division and Uxbridge's cavalry charge turned the tide. There are still controversies over the French formation, but this was not necessarily inadequate.

■ Right: Professor Bruno Colson's book, *Napoleon on War*, is available from Oxford University Press, priced £27.99



■ The ill-fated charge of the Scots Greys resulted in the French 45th Line's eagle being captured

BRITISH SQUARES UNDER ATTACK AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRUSSIANS

With the French still in the ascendancy, the coalition soldiers had a choice: hold out against a sustained offensive or be slaughtered

As his cavalry disappeared over the ridge to attack the British squares, Napoleon may have heard the well-timed salvo from Captain Mercer's cannons as they stood firm against Ney's charge. Deadly case shot launched out into the horses, blunting the charge significantly. Many horses were taken down from under their riders, but the French kept coming as the British infantry fixed their bayonets, kneeled, and braced for impact.

At almost the exact time Ney launched his charge, the Prussians arrived on the battlefield. After a gruelling 12-hour march from Wavre, Blücher had kept to his word, and he and 50,000 men were ready to enter the

fray. Outnumbering the French three to one, the full might of the Prussian force ploughed into Napoleon's right flank in the village of Plancenoit. It was left to the French commander Lobau to repel this black-shirted enemy who were eager to avenge their defeat at Ligny.

Back in the centre of the field, General Kellerman and 3,500 lancer cavalry had come to the aid of Ney, with their long blades to thrust into the allied soldiers before they could raise their bayonets. This destruction went on for two hours as a cycle of constant artillery fire and cavalry hit Wellington's men. Some companies, like the Cumberland Hussars, lost their resolve and fled the bloodbath. The vast

majority of coalition troops held firm though, and with each charge the French attacks were losing their potency.

The charge was called off at 6pm after the loss of life became too much. Napoleon's infantry and artillery had failed to adequately support the cavalry and the offensive was a costly failure. Despite their comrades successfully defending against the cavalry behind the ridge, the garrison of La Haye Sainte had reached breaking point and was forced to withdraw. Wellington had now lost this crucial centre and the French guns were able to move up to within deadly range of the British position – victory was still hanging by a thread.

4 "PREPARE TO RECEIVE CAVALRY!"

The French cuirassiers arrive at the coalition lines and are surprised at how little effect the artillery has had. Close knit and strong, the allied ranks repel the 8,000 horsemen, and so begins one of the bloodiest stages of the battle.

5 COMING OF THE PRUSSIANS

As the clock strikes four, black-uniformed figures appear on the east of the battlefield. It is the Prussians. Lobau is sent over to engage the new arrivals as the vengeful Prussians smash into the right flank.

6 CAPTAIN MERCER'S ARTILLERY BARRAGE

Led by Captain Alexander Mercer, canister shots are sent into the horsemen. At this point, the French artillery fire once again and are joined by 3,500 fresh horses led by General François Kellerman.

7 FAILED OFFENSIVE

Armed with lancers, Kellerman's riders lay siege to the squares but as the allies continue to hold firm, each subsequent attack loses more ferocity. At 6pm, Ney is forced to call off the offensive.

8 TURN OF THE TIDE

Despite the onslaught, Wellington's right flank holds firm and now with Prussian aid, Napoleon is forced to play his final card. With only a few hours of daylight left, the French Imperial Guard are sent in.

1 FRENCH CAVALRY ASSAULT

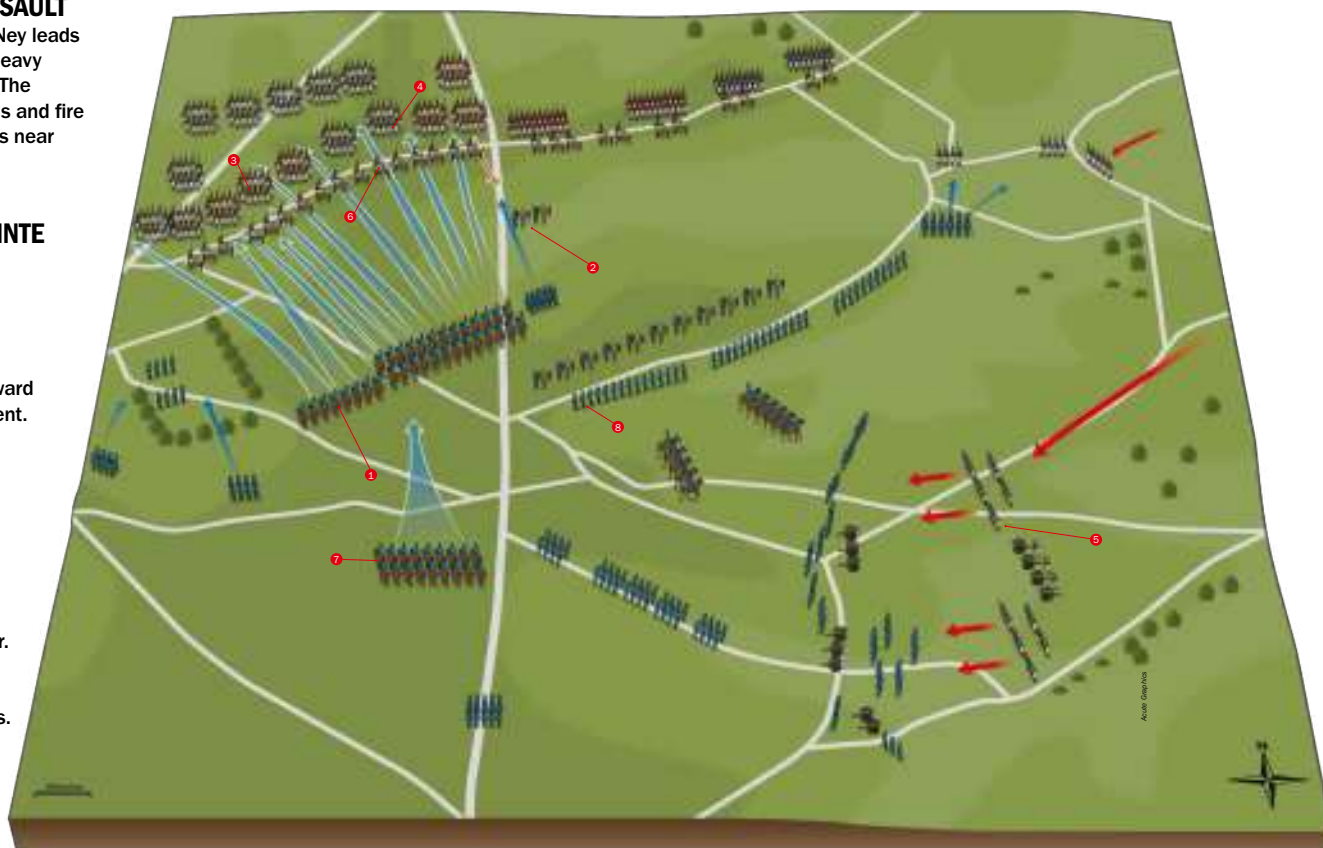
Seizing the initiative, Marshal Ney leads Milhaud's IV Cavalry Corps of heavy cavalry into the allied column. The coalition's battalions raise arms and fire round after round as the horses near their frontline.

2 LOSS OF LA HAYE SAINTE

After defending valiantly, the King's German Legion run out of ammunition and are forced to retreat or be routed. Now in occupation of the outpost, the French move their artillery forward and continue their bombardment.

3 SQUARE FORMATION

To combat the French cavalry advance, the allied battalions on the left tighten to form squares. Bayonets fixed, they brace themselves as the thunder of hooves draws closer. Wellington and his officers continually rally their troops as the heat of the battle escalates.



PRUSSIANS AND FALTERING ARTILLERY: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

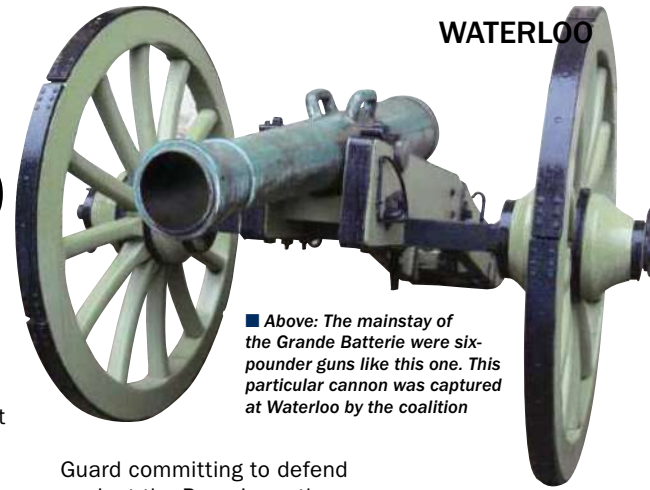
After the mass French offensive failed, the Prussians laid siege to Napoleon's right flank, opening up a second front

Napoleon had begun his military career serving in artillery units, and as such many of his battlefield decisions were based around the awesome power of his Grande Batterie. At Waterloo, however, the cannons that had been so devastating across Europe were simply not the well-oiled units they once were.

Nonetheless, through the cover of the French cavalry and with La Haye Sainte finally taken, the French guns could make their way closer to the British positions. In a terrifying onslaught, the 27th Regiment of Foot, the Inniskilling, was almost wiped out.

Meanwhile, over in the village of Plancenoit, the Prussians were battering down the French right flank. Lobau and his units were fiercely defending the village but were slowly being pushed back due to the sheer weight of Prussian numbers. It was now a race against time. Napoleon had to defeat Wellington before Blücher punched a hole in his right flank.

With Lobau fending off the Prussians, the French had lost almost 10,000 men that could have been utilised against Wellington's tiring forces. With several units of Imperial



■ Above: The mainstay of the Grande Batterie were six-pounder guns like this one. This particular cannon was captured at Waterloo by the coalition

Guard committing to defend against the Prussians, the fight for the village became yet another bitter struggle.

■ Right: Cannonballs littered the battlefield at Waterloo. This projectile is from an 18-pounder cannon



THE GRANDE BATTERIE

The strongest force of cannon in the world, Napoleon firmly believed that artillery was the key to winning battles

The 250 French guns at Waterloo could fire round shots farther than one kilometre (0.6 miles) and were part of the French Gribeauval and Year XI systems that pioneered the use of light artillery. Each brigade of the Imperial Guard had a six-pounder foot battery while every cavalry brigade had a mobile six-pounder horse battery. Each battery consisted of between four to six guns and two howitzers operated by 80-150 men.

Throughout his military career, Napoleon used artillery in an attacking capacity,

battering the enemy before sending in the cavalry and infantry to finish the job. His request on 18 June was "to astonish the enemy and shake his morale."

Overconfident, the emperor deviated from his standard tactic at Waterloo, sending in his troops before the artillery had completed its job. The late start also affected the French, as if the cannons had begun firing earlier, the coalition may have been knocked out before the Prussians arrived. Despite the late start, the cannons still shook the resolve of the allies.

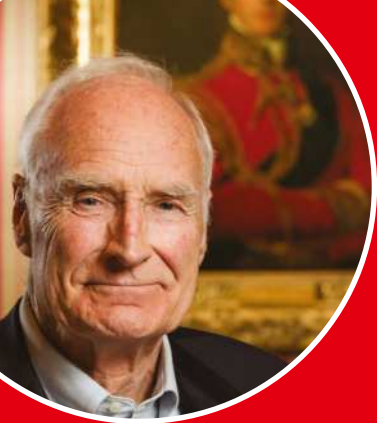
The French guns fired, on average, 120 shots per minute, outperforming Wellington's artillery as his caissons were hit and set on fire. During the battle, however, Napoleon was unable to co-ordinate his cavalry with his artillery. This was a grave mistake as both the brave cavalry charges and the destructive artillery barrages were put to waste. As a result, coalition infantry squares were able to hold their ground against the onslaught, and the cavalry failed to get among them with their lances and sabres.

"OVERCONFIDENT, THE EMPEROR DEVIATED FROM HIS STANDARD TACTIC AT WATERLOO, SENDING IN HIS TROOPS BEFORE THE ARTILLERY HAD COMPLETED ITS JOB"

■ Below: 12-pounder Gribeauval cannons were used extensively by Napoleon in warfare. They were replaced prior to Waterloo by the XI system but some still remained in use

■ The French army depicted crossing the Sierra de Guadarrama in the Peninsular War





“THEY CAUSED A HUGE AMOUNT OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ON THE ALLIED SIDE, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE”

Historian and broadcaster Peter Snow assesses the effectiveness of the Grande Batterie and how its mismanagement contributed to Napoleon's defeat

HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE FRENCH ARTILLERY DURING THE BATTLE?

The artillery was well used by both sides. Napoleon had 250 guns, Wellington 150. However, the emperor used his guns rather inefficiently. They caused a huge amount of death and destruction on the allied side but not as much as they should have done. One reason for this was that they were firing in muddy and rainy conditions after the terrible night of 17 June. When the cannonballs were shot they would land with a plonk and not bounce forwards. Also, the French couldn't really see the British and allied units behind the ridge, so didn't know exactly where to fire.

The third problem Napoleon had was that when firing at the British positions, he failed to destroy the two most important parts of the defence – the farms at Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. Both survived almost unscathed, although the roof at Hougoumont was burned off. He failed to land a round shot anywhere near these farms, which made it much more difficult for the French to break in. They never broke into Hougoumont and only made it into La Haye Sainte at 6pm, when it was too late to make any difference to the battle.

HOW DID DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTILLERY WORK TOGETHER?

They had to judge what kind of rounds to fire off in different situations. If you were bashing down walls

of farms, as Napoleon should have been trying to do, you would use round shots, but they weren't used very often against the farms. Because of the mud, the round shot was less effective than it could have been.

Canister shots were effective at no more than 150-200 metres (492-656 feet) as they were like firing a shotgun with lots of little musket ball rounds, which were terribly effective against infantry or indeed approaching cavalry. There was also shrapnel, which the British were very keen on. It was a round shot with a charge inside that blew up the shot as it arrived at the target. This was very effective against infantry.

WERE THE CONDITIONS ON THE DAY POOR FOR ARTILLERY?

Even though Napoleon failed to get his guns up to start the battle at dawn, he still got them there. It was an extraordinary feat when you think how they dragged those guns up to the frontline in that appalling weather. It was something like 15 miles from Quatre Bras to Waterloo and the farms on

the southern side of the Waterloo ridge. Moving the guns in those conditions must have been extremely difficult.

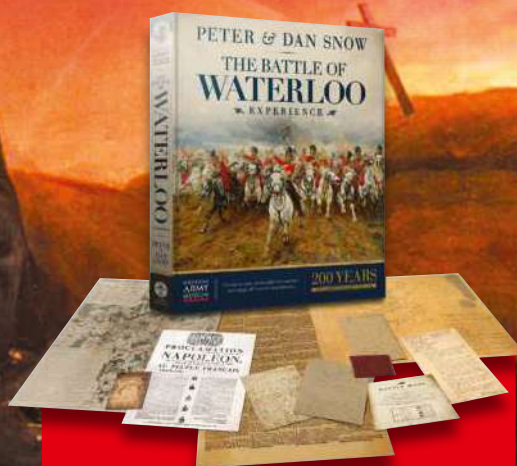
COULD NAPOLEON HAVE WON IF HE HAD MORE AMMUNITION?

I don't think it would have made a big difference. The crucial failure of Waterloo was not using the artillery against the buildings, which were so critical to Wellington's defence. More rounds and more hits could have made a difference but the fundamental problems were still there – the mud and that they couldn't see their targets behind the ridge. The battle was largely lost by the weather.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WAS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO?

I think the most important moment of the battle, undoubtedly, was when von Bülow's Prussians were able to seriously engage the French right wing at Plancenoit. There is no doubt in my mind that Napoleon's need to divert ten battalions of the Imperial Guard was a distraction to his determination to break through Wellington's line, so he had to deviate from his plan to bust through the centre. Nearly half of the Imperial Guard were sent to the right to keep off the Prussians and helped decide, or in fact decided, the failure of Napoleon to win at Waterloo.

“THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WERE STILL THERE – THE MUD AND THAT THEY COULDN'T SEE THEIR TARGETS BEHIND THE RIDGE. THE BATTLE WAS LARGELY LOST BY THE WEATHER”



The Battle of Waterloo Experience

Full of vivid accounts, astonishing imagery and engrossing source material, *The Battle Of Waterloo Experience* by Peter and Dan Snow is published by Andre Deutsch and priced at £30.

THE FINAL ATTACK AND AFTERMATH

With the battle slipping away, Napoleon sent his battalions of Middle and Old Imperial Guard in a final attempt to crush Wellington's line

As the fight for Plancenoit raged on, with bitter street fighting inflicting terrible losses on each side, at about 7.30pm Napoleon ordered the remainder of his Imperial Guard to attack Wellington's centre. Made up of about 6,000 fresh troops from the Middle and Old Guard, and supported by artillery fire, the unit marched up the slope between Hougomont and La Haye Sainte. Facing them were two British brigades: the Guards under Major-General Maitland and the 5th Brigade under Major-General Halkett.

As the bearskins of the Imperial Guard appeared over the brow of the ridge, the British troops levelled their muskets and fired a volley, cutting deep into the first ranks of advancing troops. After a rapid exchange of fire, however, the British line began to falter, and Major Halkett was hideously wounded by a musket ball straight through his mouth. Just as it seemed the Imperial Guard was about to break through, a Dutch-Belgian unit positioned in reserve advanced and fired on the enemy, halting their advance and rallying the British. Meanwhile, Maitland's brigade had managed to push back unassisted, unleashing all 1,500

muskets on the French in quick succession as they mounted the ridge.

With their muskets empty, Maitland then ordered them to fix bayonets and charge at the enemy. Startled by the sudden and deadly volley fire, as well as the screaming line of red rushing towards them, the Imperial Guard hesitated. As the two sides clashed, and flanking fire from another British unit began to chop away at the ranks of Guard still advancing, the cry went up: "La Garde recule!" Napoleon's elite Guard was forced back down the slope it had just marched up.

Wellington shortly sounded the general advance of his army after the fleeing French, crying: "No cheering lads, but forward and complete your victory!" The shouts of relief and elation from the pursuing British ranks mingled with the desperate cries of the fleeing French.

Meanwhile, the Prussian force at Plancenoit finally prevailed and Blücher's men led the bulwark of the relentless chase. A vengeful orgy of slaughter ensued, as no quarter was given by the Prussians to those surrendering or even the wounded.

As Napoleon raced back to France in his carriage, his Imperial Guard fought on in defiant squares to cover the retreat of

its emperor. General Cambronne, the Guard commander, reportedly told the coalition:

"The Guard dies, but does not surrender." Later, Wellington and Blücher famously met at the inn La Belle Alliance, which that very morning had been at the centre of Napoleon's position. Reflecting on the events of the battle, Wellington would say that it was "the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life."

With the battle and his army lost, Napoleon shortly abdicated and surrendered to the British, who exiled him once again, this time to the island of St Helena, where he saw out the remainder of his days.

■ *Right: This is the skull of John Shaw, one of the most imposing soldiers in the coalition. Over six-foot tall, he perished on the battlefield after he was surrounded by nine cuirassiers*



■ *Napoleon seen about to depart in his carriage, as his men desperately retreat around him*



NAPOLEON IN EXILE

HAVING ESCAPED FROM EXILE ONCE ALREADY, COULD NAPOLEON HAVE DONE IT AGAIN FROM THE UNFORGIVING ISLAND OF ST HELENA?



apoleon Bonaparte spent the last six years of his life as a British prisoner on the remote South Atlantic island of St Helena. Though the island's sheer isolation and forbidding terrain posed daunting

challenges to anyone hoping to rescue the former French Emperor, rumours of escape plots abounded. The British government took these seriously and went to enormous lengths to prevent Napoleon's liberation. But did he even want to escape?

Following his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815, Napoleon abdicated the French throne and gave himself up to Britain, hoping that the Prince Regent (future King George IV) would grant him asylum. Instead, Britain – acting on behalf of the European powers allied against Napoleon – transported him to St Helena. A rock 1,900 kilometres west of Africa and 3,200 kilometres east of Brazil seemed an ideal place to stash a public menace, especially one who had escaped from the considerably less remote island of Elba a few months earlier.

Jailbreak would not be easy. St Helena is essentially the top of an extinct volcano. There are few accessible landing places among its steep cliffs and the interior is crisscrossed with peaks and ravines. A British surgeon who arrived with one of the regiments to guard Napoleon described the island as “the ugliest and most dismal rock conceivable, of rugged and abrupt surface, rising like an enormous black wart from the face of the deep.” In addition to the natural barriers, there were plenty of man-made ones. St Helena had been in the possession of the East India Company since the mid-17th century. It was already defended as an important port of call for vessels plying the route between Europe and Asia. The landing places were well-fortified and protected by powerful gun batteries. Forts overlooked Jamestown, the island's main settlement and port.

When the ship carrying Napoleon to St Helena dropped anchor off Jamestown in October 1815, “every platform, every aperture, the brow of every hill, was planted with a cannon.” Napoleon came on deck and observed through his spyglass the rocky

heights bristling with guns. He returned to his cabin without comment.

Security was beefed up considerably during Napoleon's captivity. More cannons were added, resulting in some 500 pieces of artillery, manned day and night. Additional regiments were sent from Britain, bringing the garrison to 2,800 troops, an enormous number for an island of only 120 square kilometres and a civilian population of around 6,000. Over 500 men were stationed on Deadwood Plain alone, in full view of Napoleon's residence of Longwood House.

Longwood was eight kilometres from Jamestown. It was guarded at two perimeters. The inner zone, within which Napoleon could walk and ride without restriction, stretched for a six-kilometre radius from the house. It was enclosed by a dry stone wall, with a sentry at every 50 paces. At night, during which no one was allowed to enter or leave Longwood, the sentries stood immediately outside the house at 15-pace intervals, with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed. The outer perimeter, which extended for about 19 kilometres, was defended by sentry posts and mounted guards. If Napoleon wanted to move beyond this area, he had to give prior notice and be accompanied by a British officer.

A British captain resided permanently at Longwood. He had to report to Governor Hudson Lowe twice a day with confirmation that he had seen Napoleon. No one was allowed to communicate with Napoleon or his companions without prior authorisation. Any letters going to or from Longwood House had to first be read by the governor or his London boss, Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.

The British placed lookout towers on all the major heights. News of suspicious activity could be relayed across the island using semaphore flags. The roads were watched, and there was a curfew on movement outside Jamestown after sunset.

St Helena's coast and the surrounding waters were defended by a naval squadron consisting of three frigates, two men-of-war and six brigs. The latter constantly cruised around the island. From the lookout towers, ships could be seen as far as 90 kilometres away. Any vessel approaching St Helena

“A BRITISH CAPTAIN RESIDED PERMANENTLY AT LONGWOOD. HE HAD TO REPORT TO GOVERNOR HUDSON LOWE TWICE A DAY WITH CONFIRMATION THAT HE HAD SEEN NAPOLEON”





“THE BRITISH PLACED LOOKOUT TOWERS ON ALL THE MAJOR HEIGHTS”



was accompanied until it was either given permission to anchor or was sent away. No boats were allowed to arrive or leave between sunset and sunrise.

Detailing the extensive security arrangements in a letter to a friend, the Marquis de Montchenu, France's commissioner to the island, wrote “escape seems to be materially out of the question.”

Was it, though? This elaborate British cordon had holes. Napoleon and his entourage were able to bribe captains of merchant vessels, and even British officers, to carry letters off the island. European visitors smuggled in messages and gifts for Napoleon. There are several examples of people entering Longwood House without permission. In January 1816, Napoleon escaped from his escort while out riding. He headed to Powell's Valley, an area less than two kilometres from the ocean,

where there were no guards posted – an omission that was soon fixed.

Napoleon hated the restrictions on his freedom. He detested Hudson Lowe and did everything he could to make the governor's job harder. He spent long periods inside Longwood, observing his captors. He threatened to shoot anyone who invaded his privacy. The captain who was supposed to be reporting on his whereabouts had to try to spot Napoleon from a distance, or rely on reports from members of Napoleon's household that he was still there. It wasn't long before details of escape plots fell into the governor's hands. One intercepted letter, postmarked March 1816, referred to a boat that would “drift to the back of the island... in the shape of an old cask, but so constructed that by pulling at both ends to be sea worthy, and both boat and sail which will be found inside will be painted to correspond

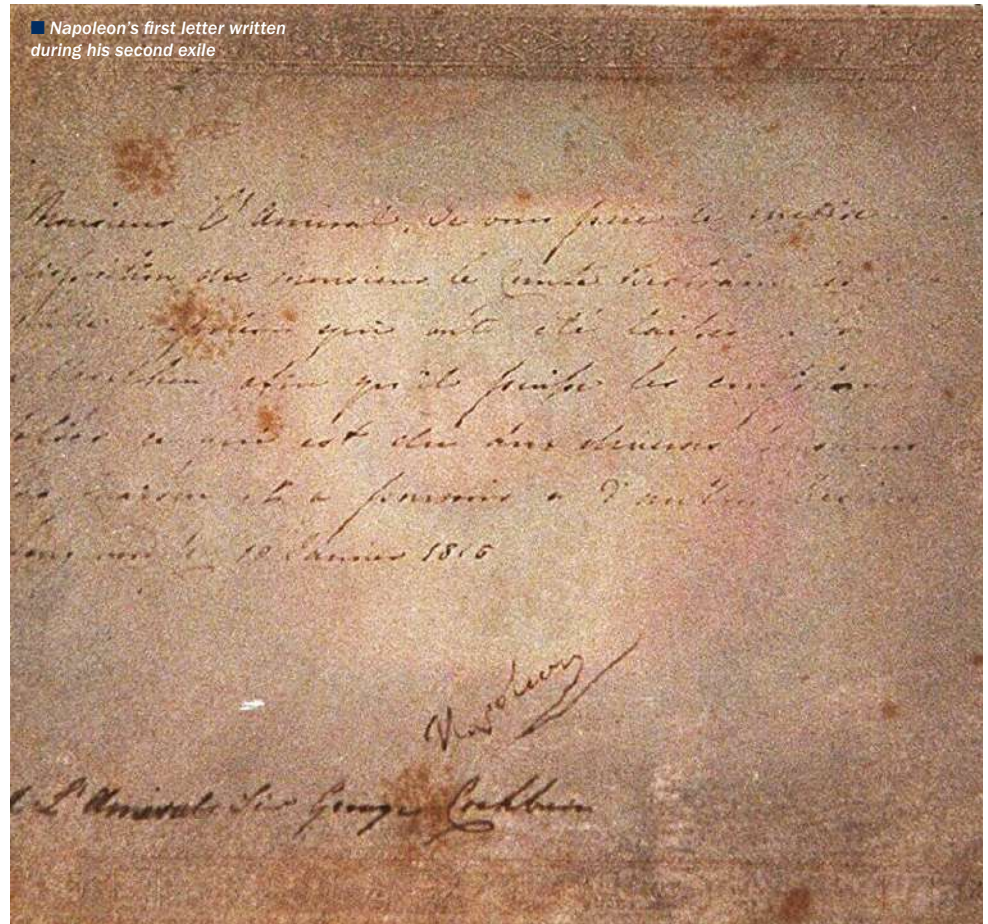
with the colour of the sea.” Napoleon was expected to slide down a cliff on a rope to reach this vessel, the ultimate destination being the United States.

In July 1816, Lowe received a dispatch from Lord Bathurst warning him about a plan by the crew of a privateer, called the True Blooded Yankee, to sail from Brazil. These “buccaneers of the most enterprising and desperate character... talked of fitting out a schooner or two and it was believed they meant to send one to Tristan da Cunha and keep one cruising at a certain distance from St Helena as a point to which Napoleon might steer if he could be apprised of their intentions and could contrive to push off in a boat.” Bathurst subsequently ordered Lowe to send a small force to occupy Tristan da Cunha, an island 1,900 kilometres south of St Helena, so that it could not be used as a base for a rescue attempt. The British

■ Napoleon on the beach at St Helena, as painted by Oscar Rex



■ Napoleon's first letter written during his second exile



had already occupied Ascension Island for the same reason.

The following year, a former member of Napoleon's imperial guard named Nicholas Raoul told French diplomats in Philadelphia that he had been entrusted by Napoleon's brother Joseph – then living in the city – with organising a plan to rescue Napoleon. This involved the recruitment of men and officers in the US, where there were many Bonapartist exiles, as well as the procurement and armament of two schooners: one at Baltimore and the other at Annapolis. A third schooner would leave Philadelphia for St Helena, "with the object of observing the position of the English cruisers and the strength of the English forces, and turning back to meet the expedition with a report of it."

According to Raoul, a French colonel had already gone with 32 officers to Pernambuco,



■ Pacing his study, Napoleon dictates his memoirs to General Gourgaud, as painted by Charles Auguste Steuben

“ESCAPE RUMOURS WERE PROBABLY SPREAD BY NAPOLEON’S SUPPORTERS WITH THE AIM OF SCARING EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS”

in northeast Brazil, to prepare a staging base on the island of Fernando de Noronha, 350 kilometres off the Brazilian coast. Here, the American schooners, with some 80 officers and 700 men, would be joined by a 74-gun ship commanded by renegade British admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane, carrying 800 men and 200 to 300 officers. This force would sail for St Helena and destroy the ships defending the island. It would then attack at three points: Jamestown in the north, Sandy Bay in the south, and Prosperous Bay near Longwood. The first landing would divert the English troops. The second would capture the island's fortifications. The third would retrieve Napoleon and put him on a ship to the United States. Further investigation contradicted many of Raoul's claims. In November 1817, one of the Frenchmen at Pernambuco confessed to a different version of the plot: "It was intended to fit out one or more fast sailing vessels...

sufficiently capacious to contain several small steamboats. These vessels after making the island of St Helena, were to keep at a considerable distance from it.... The steam boats were then to be prepared, and as they were to be sent at night and manned by persons determined to brave every danger, it was hoped that some one of them might be fortunate enough to succeed in setting their late Emperor at liberty.” After informing the Foreign Office, local British and French officials kept a close watch on Napoleonic veterans in the Americas.

Many escape rumours were probably spread by Napoleon's supporters with the aim of scaring European governments and keeping their own hopes up. After news of yet another conspiracy reached London in November 1818, a newspaper commented, "It is inconceivable how much this man, the scourge of the world, still excites public attention."

Still, the British and French governments took rescue plans seriously, particularly in light of what was happening in Europe. In September 1820, Bathurst sent Lowe his starkest warning yet: "The reports which you have recently made of the conduct of General Bonaparte and of his followers make me suspect that he is beginning to entertain serious thoughts of escaping from St Helena, and the accounts which he will have since received of what is passing in Europe will not fail to encourage this project. The overthrow of the Neapolitan Government, the revolutionary spirit which more or less prevails over all Italy, and the doubtful state of France itself, must excite his attention, and clearly show that a crisis is fast approaching, if not already arrived, when his escape would be productive of important consequences. That his partisans are active cannot be doubted; and if he be ever willing to hazard the attempt, he will never allow such an opportunity to escape.

"In what shape and in what manner this attempt will be made, I cannot judge, but I am satisfied this storm will not pass over unnoticed at Longwood. General Bonaparte

THE COST OF CONTAINING NAPOLEON

Exile might've been the choice of punishment, but the Emperor and his entourage cost the English much more than they bargained for

Conto generale della spesa fatta dopo il mio arrivo a Londra il dì 19 aprile 1819, fino al giorno della partenza.		
Per l'Imperatore.		
Due globe, un telescopio grande, una sedia, un chesamerito.	38.	912.
Una batteria di Cannoni, fieno di paja &c.	55. 10.	1332.
112 Capi di Cannoni	19. 10.	468.
tre libri preziosi	4.	96.
per la pagnotta	85.	2050.
per portare per via di mare l'acqua	4.	96.
Aceto d'ortogana	1. 11.	37. 20.
Piccoli	1. 10.	36.
una scabettina	14.	16. 80.
profumi di Salami	8. 6.	199. 80.
Due Anziani a guidare	7 1/2	9.
<hr/>		
Per l'hoi	L. 218. 9	5242. 80.
per la spesa che ho fatta presto al Sign. Antemarchi quale mi aveva avuto l'incarico per 200 luigi per viaggio, e per la spesa del Conte di fortuna		
	8. 5 1/2	200
E ci sono stati altri due da Denez, e poi della dogana		
	5. 15.	138.
per la spesa per ritorno alla casa in Firenze volte		
	5. 9	131.
	6. 10.	156.
per i Camerieri		
	5.	120.
Creati a Antemarchi		
13	111.	2664.
13	54. 4.	1300.
13	17.	408.
13	36.	1364.
13	24.	576.
13	6. 5.	150.
13	5. 18 1/2	142.
13	6.	144.
<hr/>		
Creapochi	L. 529. 16.	12715. 80.

■ **A letter written by Antonio Buonavita in 1819 concerning the supplies to bring to Napoleon I**

Napoleon arrived on St Helena with an entourage of 24 people, including various counts and generals, their wives and children, and servants. All of these people had to be provided for. The British government stipulated that the expenses of Napoleon's household should not exceed £8,000 per year, which was the allowance for a British general of the highest rank. But it was not long before the annual costs of provisioning Longwood soared to an estimated £20,000. Some of this could be explained by shortages of supplies and some price-gouging, with the influx of people to the island. But it was also due to the extravagant tastes of Napoleon's companions.

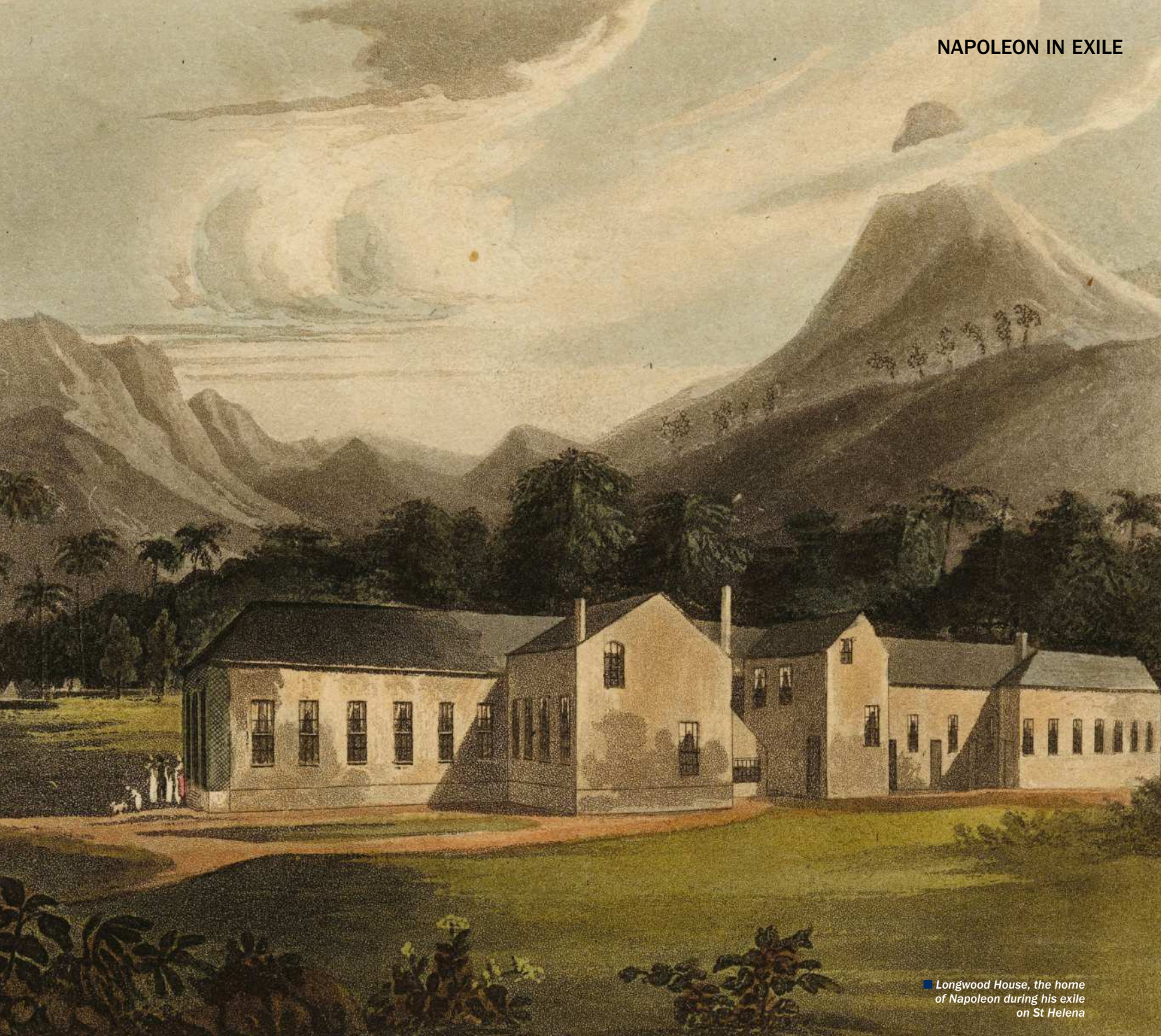
Every day the purveyors had to furnish “90 pounds of beef, six chickens, 74lbs bread, 5lbs butter, 2lbs of lard, 9lbs sugar, 1¼lbs coffee, 1lb tea, 9lbs wax candles, 30 eggs, 1lb cheese, 5lbs flour, 7lbs salt meat, 2¼ hundred-weight firewood, three bottles of beer, vegetables, fruit, oil and vinegar, seven bottles of Champagne or Graves, one bottle Madeira, one bottle Constantia, six bottles of ordinary wine, and each servant was also entitled to one bottle of Cape or Canary wine each day.”

Every fortnight, the following was provided: "Eight ducks, two turkeys, two geese, two sugar-loaves, half a sack of rice, two hams of up to 14lbs, 45 bushels of coal, 7lbs of butter, salt, mustard, pepper, capers, lamp oil, peas, fish to the value of £4, milk £5."

The volume of alcohol consumed was particularly shocking to the British and became a matter for discussion in the House of Commons. Excluding children and servants, there were nine adults in Napoleon's household, plus Napoleon. In one fortnight, they went through 266 bottles of wine (almost two bottles per person per day) plus 42 bottles of porter.

Governor Hudson Lowe insisted that Napoleon economise. In protest, Napoleon – who was far from destitute – instructed his staff to sell some of the silver tableware he had brought with him. This had the desired result of making the British look mean. Lowe finally succeeded in persuading Lord Bathurst to raise Napoleon's allowance to **£12,000** per year.

The Longwood allowance was relatively small in the scale of expenses associated with keeping Napoleon captive. There was pay and provisions for the additional troops. There was the additional ordnance. There was the governor's salary (£12,000, which also included the allowance for Lowe's household). There was also the expense of the naval squadron. In 1816, the estimated annual cost of confining Napoleon on St Helena – including Napoleon's increased allowance – was £96,032. That is equivalent to roughly £7,884,300 per year today. Multiplying by the five and a half years that Napoleon spent on St Helena brings the total cost of his imprisonment to within the range of £43.4 million.



■ Longwood House, the home of Napoleon during his exile on St Helena

has money at [his] command; he has partisans in abundance; he has means of communication which your regulations may occasionally intercept but cannot entirely prevent; the times are most favourable for the attempt; and, without thinking that he habitually courts a hazardous enterprise, I cannot persuade myself that he will shrink from one which, if successful, must now promise such important results."

The plot being concocted at the time was the most fantastical of all: to rescue Napoleon using a submarine. This was not as far-fetched as it sounds. A vessel that could briefly operate underwater had been built as early as the 17th century. During the American War of Independence, an American submarine had tried unsuccessfully to blow up a British ship. In 1800, when Napoleon was First Consul,

American inventor Robert Fulton conducted several successful trials of a submarine in France. After Napoleon withdrew his support, Fulton moved to England where he may have met Irish adventurer Thomas Johnson. When Fulton returned to the US, Johnson claimed to have acquired Fulton's plans and considered himself competent to carry them out. During the War of 1812, the British government commissioned Johnson to build a submarine, which he apparently did. In early 1820, officers were sent to determine whether the vessel was worth the £100,000 Johnson wanted for it. They paid him less than £5,000.

Johnson later claimed to have constructed two steam-powered submarines, the *Eagle* and the smaller *Etna*, for the express purpose of rescuing Napoleon. Equipped with 20 torpedoes, the two vessels would anchor

along the coast near Longwood. Submerged during the day, they would surface at night. "Everything being then perfectly in order, I should then go on shore, provided with some other small articles, such as a ball of strong twine, an iron bolt, with a block, which I would sink into the ground at the top of the rock, opposite Longwood House, and abreast of the submarine ships. I should then obtain my introduction to his Imperial Majesty, and communicate my plan."

Johnson's plan was to disguise himself and Napoleon, and lower Napoleon down the side of a cliff to the Etna. He would then "cast off our moorings, and haul alongside the *Eagle*, and... get under way as soon as it became dark. In this position I should propel by steam until I had given the island a good berth, and then ship our masts and make sail, steering for



■ Hudson Lowe, the Governor of St Helena and Napoleon's loathed gaoler

the United States. I calculated that no hostile ship or ships could impede our progress... as in the event of an attack I should haul our sails, and strike yards and masts (which would only occupy about 40 minutes), and then submerge. Under water we should wait the approach of the enemy, and then, by the aid of the little Etna, attaching the torpedo to her bottom, affect her destruction in 15 minutes."

Johnson may have actually launched a submarine in late 1820. The painter Walter Greaves later claimed that his father, who owned a boat yard at Chelsea, said "there was a mysterious boat that was intended to go under water... for the purpose of getting Napoleon off the island of St Helena. So, on one dark night in November, she proceeded down the river. She managed to get below London Bridge. The officers boarding her, Capt Johnson in the meantime threatened to shoot them. But they paid no attention to his threats, seized her and... destroyed her." Johnson himself claimed "the vessels were laid down to be coppered when news arrived of the exile's death" in 1821.

Even if Johnson or another potential rescuer had managed to make it to St Helena, would Napoleon have been willing to risk his life in an escape attempt?

According to Napoleon's companions on St Helena, the exiled Emperor considered several proposed plans, but refused to go through with any of them. Responding to one, Napoleon said he "believed in the success of his plan, but that his resolution not to struggle against his destiny being immovable, he must persist in refusing his offers." More to the point, Napoleon considered it beneath his dignity to disguise himself or hide like a common criminal. After Napoleon's death, Generals Henri Bertrand and Charles Montholon, who

"JOHNSON'S PLAN WAS TO DISGUISE NAPOLEON"

WHERE MIGHT NAPOLEON HAVE GONE?

Napoleon would have had his pick of destinations had he escaped from St Helena

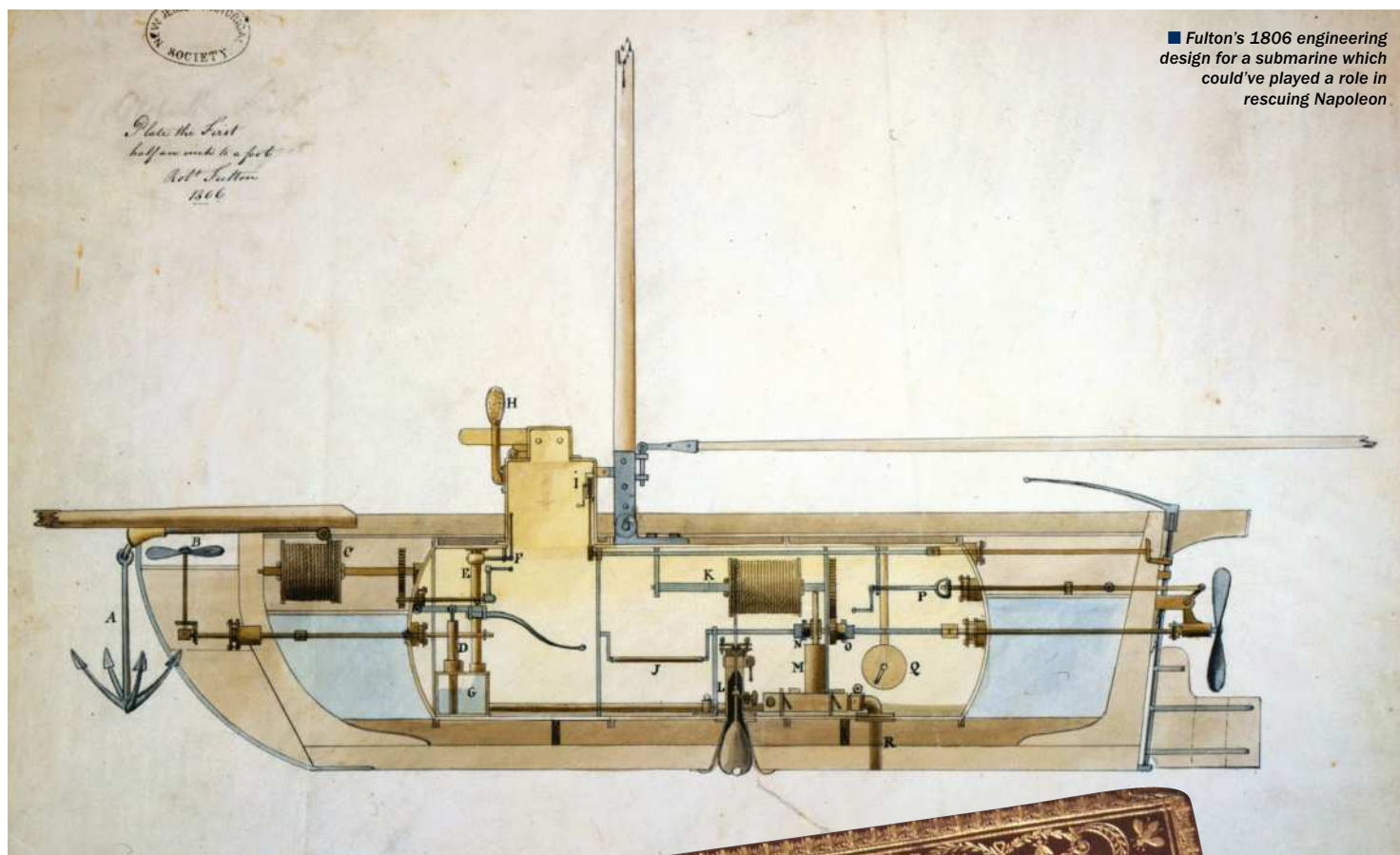


LIVE IN EXILE IN THE UNITED STATES

Hundreds of Napoleon's supporters fled to the United States after Napoleon's 1815 defeat, including Napoleon's older brother Joseph, who settled in Bordentown, New Jersey. Congress granted the French exiles a tract of undeveloped land in Alabama, where they tried unsuccessfully to cultivate olives and vineyards. In 1818, some 150 Bonapartists attempted to form an armed colony called Champ d'Asile (Field of Asylum) in Texas, which was then part of New Spain (Mexico). They were soon chased out by the Spaniards, and many wound up in New Orleans. Champ d'Asile may have been linked with an alleged plot to put Joseph Bonaparte on the throne of an independent Mexico, or with plans to rescue Napoleon from St Helena.

Napoleon seriously considered trying to escape to the United States after the Battle of Waterloo, before deciding to give himself up to the British. When he was on St Helena, Napoleon often speculated on what he might have done in the United States. This ranged from retirement on the banks of the Mississippi or the Ohio River, to travelling across the continent, to founding the core of "a new homeland." He said, "I would have loved to realise this dream. It would have brought me new glory."



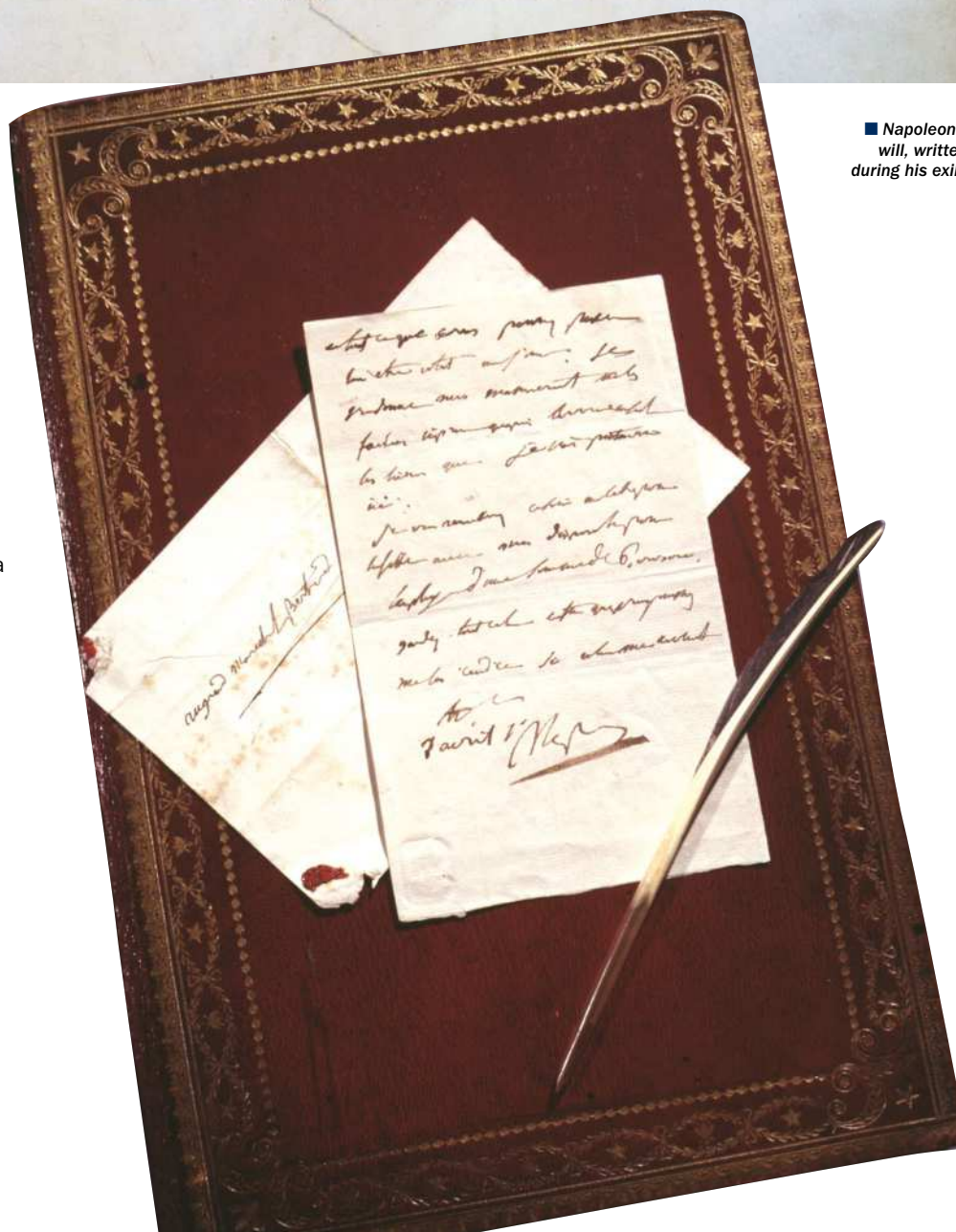


■ Fulton's 1806 engineering design for a submarine which could've played a role in rescuing Napoleon

were with Napoleon on St Helena, told Lord Holland "he was a man never to attempt anything where concealment or disguise or bodily exertion was required. If he was not able to walk on board the ship with hat on his head and his sword at his side, he would take no measures to go."

Another companion, General Gaspard Gourgaud, told the Russian commissioner to St Helena, Count Balmain, that Napoleon could "go to America whenever he wishes." When Balmain asked why Napoleon hadn't done so, Gourgaud replied, "However unhappy he is here, he secretly enjoys the sense of importance which is evident in his being guarded so closely and the constant interest which all the European Powers take in him. Several times he has told us: 'I cannot live as a private personage. I would rather be a prisoner than to be free in the United States.'" According to Montholon, Napoleon feared he would be assassinated or forgotten if he went to the United States. He also entertained hopes that an eventual change of government in London or Paris would end his captivity. He told Gourgaud, "When Louis XVIII dies, great events may take place; and if Lord Holland should then be Prime Minister of England, they may bring me back to Europe. But what I most hope for is the death of the Prince Regent, which will place the young Princess Charlotte on the English throne. She will bring me back to Europe."

Napoleon died on St Helena on 5 May 1821 at the age of 51. His body finally did make it off the island, 19 years later, when it was repatriated to France and laid to rest in Les Invalides in Paris.



■ Napoleon's will, written during his exile

■ Sir William Quiller Orchardson's 1880 scene entitled *Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon*



■ The death of Napoleon Bonaparte in Longwood House



WHAT IF... NAPOLEON HAD WON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO?

IT'S ONE OF HISTORY'S GREAT HYPOTHETICALS, BUT WOULD A FRENCH VICTORY AT WATERLOO REALLY HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY? WE ASKED A PAIR OF EXPERTS TO GIVE THEIR TAKES

What would have happened if Napoleon had won the Battle of Waterloo?

Alan Forrest: He would certainly have taken Brussels and he might have tried to advance toward the boundary of the Rhine and Schelt. But there was no possibility of long-term success. He would surely have gone on to lose within weeks or months, because although the British, Dutch, Belgians and Prussians were involved at Waterloo, neither the Austrians nor the Russians were, and they had armies of 150,000 to 200,000 waiting in the wings. In particular, the Tsar wanted Napoleon destroyed: he didn't believe Europe could remain at peace if Napoleon remained at large.

Mark Adkin: I wouldn't have thought [that Napoleon would have enjoyed success for] more than a few weeks. If he had won the battle, Wellington would have withdrawn what was left of his army and Napoleon would have had to hurry back to Paris. The Allies would have waited until the Austrians and Russians had arrived and the British and Prussians had recovered, then would have teamed up together. Napoleon wouldn't have had much chance at all.

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT THE FRENCH PEOPLE WERE WAR-WEARY IN 1815; THEY WANTED PEACE ABOVE ALL ELSE AND FEW BELIEVED NAPOLEON COULD DELIVER THAT”

Why did Napoleon lose at Waterloo?

Adkin: Napoleon had a big problem because he was surrounded by various countries that were desperate to get rid of him. There were four main threats once he established himself back in Paris: The Anglo-Dutch Army under Wellington in Belgium, the Prussians under Blücher in Germany, the Russians under Barclay De Tolly, and the Austrians under Schwarzenberg. That's nearly half million men under arms and they all planned to converge on Paris. The only way he could possibly win was to make the maximum use of the time it was going to take Russians and the Austrians and so on to get there. While they were marching, he had to deal with the others, in particular Wellington and Blücher. He wanted to defeat the Prussians at Ligny, while Wellington was held off by a smaller force. Once the Prussians were defeated, he could turn the combined strength on Wellington. He succeeded partially at Ligny – his strategy worked and he split the two Allies, turned on the Prussians and defeated them, but he didn't crush them. He let them withdraw and recover. That was a mistake. Napoleon allowed them to withdraw north instead of east, and by withdrawing north they were able to turn and then rejoin Wellington's forces.

Forrest: Napoleon had no possibility of finding large numbers of additional soldiers because he was now reliant on the French population alone, and while he was on Elba, France had abolished conscription. As long as the Allies could unite their forces against him, he was hopelessly outnumbered, and his failure to drive home his advantage after Ligny proved to be a fatal mistake.

So if Napoleon had stopped the Prussians at Ligny, he would have defeated the British at Waterloo?

Adkin: Wellington knew the Prussians were coming; he had been promised that they were coming, which is the actual reason why he stood at Waterloo and defended that bridge. If he knew the Prussians were not coming, then he would probably have withdrawn until he could join the Prussians and therefore the battle would not have taken place, not there anyway. So the crucial thing is the Prussians and their arrival clinched it [the battle].

Did the people of France support Napoleon's return from Elba?

Forrest: The most important thing to remember is that the French people were war-weary in 1815; they wanted peace above all else and few believed Napoleon could deliver that. On the other hand, there was no enthusiasm for the Bourbons and certainly no desire to go back to the Ancien Régime. The fear was that the Bourbons would try to restore the kind of aristocratic and clerical authority that had existed previously. Napoleon had surrounded himself with luxury and riches at the height of the empire, but when he returned from Elba in 1815 he sought to present himself as the little corporal of the army who had risen through talent to be its commander, but who remained essentially a man of the people, true to the ideals of the Revolution of 1789. This proved a clever tactic.

Adkin: Most of the old soldiers were tremendously loyal to Napoleon. Napoleon had raised the standing of the ordinary French soldier during all those campaigns. He was extremely generous and gave them good pay. When he came back from Elba, I think thousands of these men, who had been thrown out of the army by the Bourbons coming back, had nothing and were no longer the number-one citizens like they used to be, so they rejoined Napoleon in their thousands.



ALAN FORREST



Alan Forrest is emeritus professor of modern history at the University of York. He has written widely on French revolutionary and Napoleonic history. His books include *Napoleon's Men: The Soldiers Of The Revolution And Empire*, and a biography simply called *Napoleon*. He has also authored a book on the Battle of Waterloo for Oxford University Publishing's Great Battles series, released for the battle's bicentenary in 2015.

MARK ADKIN



Mark Adkin is a military historian who took up writing after serving in the British Army for 18 years and over ten years working in the Colonial Service in the Pacific. He is the author of *The Waterloo Companion: The Complete Guide To World's Most Famous Land Battle*, and has more recently written *The Western Front Companion*. He also wrote *The Sharpe Companion*, which placed Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe novels in historical context.

■ Even if Napoleon had won at Waterloo it is likely Paris would have been taken and the great general would have been executed

THE ARMIES AT WATERLOO

French	British	Prussian
Commander Napoleon Bonaparte	Commander Duke of Wellington	Commander Field Marshal Von Blücher
Troops 55,000	Troops 56,000	Troops 49,000
Guns 256	Guns 156	Guns 134
Cavalry 14,000	Cavalry 11,000	Cavalry 19,800

If he promised to abandon his imperial ambitions, could Napoleon have negotiated to stay in power in France rather than the Allies restoring the Bourbons again?

Adkin: He tried to at the beginning, after escaping from Elba. He tried then to convince the European powers he wanted to avoid war and that he renounced all claims to Belgium, Holland, Germany and Poland. He was unsuccessful, of course.

Forrest: This was never realistic. Russia wouldn't allow it and I'm not sure that Britain would, either. Britain did, however, want France to remain a viable European power since it was an important part of the balance of power structure on which peace depended. Britain was aware of the possibility of a rampant nationalistic Prussia and was very aware of the threat posed by Russia, especially in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. Britain particularly needed to maintain lines of communication with India. Remember that Britain was an emerging global power in 1815 and that the Russians were aware of that. So they needed to protect France's position, but that also meant that they had to be sure France would be a responsible member of the international community. For that reason they had to get rid of Napoleon. It didn't really matter who else was there, the Bourbons would do, but they were sure that they did not want Napoleon to play that role.

If they wouldn't accept him as a ruler of France, would the Allies still have gone down the route of exiling Napoleon to St Helena, potentially running the risk him escaping again?

Forrest: Napoleon himself was much more terrified after Waterloo of falling into the hands of the Bourbons, who might have done just that. He chose to surrender to the English in

“MOST OF THE OLD SOLDIERS WERE TREMENDOUSLY LOYAL TO NAPOLEON [...] HE GAVE THEM GOOD PAY”

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

- **1813**
● **Battle of Leipzig**
Napoleon is decisively beaten in battle for the first time, by a coalition including troops from Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden. He is forced to return to France but the coalition continues to pursue him.
16 October 1813
- **Napoleon abdicates**
After being defeated by the Allies of the Sixth Coalition, Napoleon is exiled to the island of Elba. The pre-revolutionary Bourbon monarchy is restored and Louis XVIII becomes King of France.
11 April 1814
- **Beginning of Napoleon's Hundred Days**
Napoleon escapes Elba and after landing on the French mainland convinces the regiment sent to intercept him to join him and march on Paris. As he moves north, more soldiers defect to join him. King Louis XVIII flees to the Netherlands.
26 February 1815



- **Congress of Vienna**
Representatives of Austria, Britain, France, Russia, and Prussia declare Napoleon an 'outlaw', marking the beginning of the War of the Seventh Coalition.
13 March 1815



- **The Waterloo Campaign**
Napoleon battles the Prussians at Ligny as marshal Michel Ney and Wellington fight the inconclusive Battle of Quatre Bras. The battle with the Prussians was vital as if Napoleon won he could concentrate on the British.
16-18 June 1815



REAL TIMELINE

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

- **Napoleon defeats Wellington**
After defeating the Prussians, Napoleon waits for the battleground to dry before manoeuvring artillery and cavalry to attack the Anglo-Army at Waterloo. Facing substantial loss of life, Wellington retreats to the British garrison in Brussels.
18-19 June 1815



■ Napoleon was exiled to the Italian island of Elba but returned to Paris and declared himself emperor

the hope that he would be allowed to live as a prisoner under house arrest in England; in other words, the British would treat him decently, with a modicum of respect. As we know, the British rejected that option and exiled him to St Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic, far removed from Europe, from which there was little possibility he could escape. In France he could have faced a trial for treason and possible execution, as happened with Michel Ney and others of

Napoleon's loyal lieutenants. But that course was not without its dangers. The regime would have risked turning Napoleon into a political martyr and, given the devotion in which he was held by his followers, it surely would have got one. I think you could make the point that the Allies had to deal with Napoleon a little delicately in 1815, because there was a real danger that they would create a martyr, in the process dividing French opinion and risking lasting instability.

If France did destabilise and wasn't able to balance power in Europe, how would this change history?

Forrest: Britain becomes the dominant world power of the 19th century, which is what did happen anyway. The next challenge, except for the colonial wars in China and so on, is going to be the Crimean War, which essentially means that the balance of power that was established along with events in 1815 more or less holds.

● **Wellington defeats Napoleon**
Napoleon attempts to wipe out Wellington's centre troops with attacks before the Prussians arrive. However, he engages too late after waiting for the ground to dry and Blücher arrives. Napoleon retreats.
19 June 1815

● **Paris turns on Napoleon**
Napoleon returns to the capital in defeat three days after Waterloo to find the public no longer support national resistance. While his brother Lucien believes he can still seize power by dissolving the parliament, Napoleon senses the change and abdicates his throne in favour of his son.
22 June 1815

● **Napoleon sent to St Helena**
Napoleon is banished to the remote island of St Helena without any of the perks he enjoyed on Elba. He dies of natural causes in 1821.
23 October 1815

● **Michel Ney executed**
Napoleon's long-time ally and marshal at the Battle of Waterloo, Michel Ney is executed as a warning to Napoleon's supporters.
7 December 1815

● **Austro-Russian invasion**
The Austrian and Russian armies combined siege of Paris overwhelms the French, with Barclay de Tolly drawing on his experiences of capturing the city in 1814.
July 1815

● **Hundred Days ends**
After the president of the provisional government intimates he should leave Paris, Napoleon exits the capital. Soon after Graf von Zieten's Prussian I Corps enters Paris and defeat the French. Louis XIII is restored.
8 July 1815

● **Napoleon surrenders**
After the British Navy blocks his attempt to take a ship to America, Napoleon surrenders himself to Captain Frederick Maitland of HMS Bellerophon and is transported to England.
15 July 1815

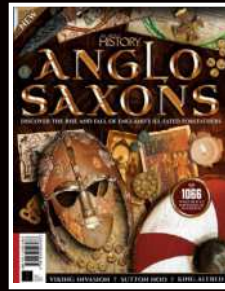
● **Emperor again**
Returning triumphant to Paris Napoleon is unopposed as he dissolves parliament and assumes dictatorial powers to better defend Paris from attack.
21 June 1815

● **Napoleon executed**
After his surrender the Allies allow Louis XVIII to execute Napoleon as they believe he is a threat to Europe's peace. However, the move divides France and Napoleon becomes a martyr.
July 1815

● **The Bonaparte Spring**
Bonapartists inspired by Napoleon's promises of constitutional reform during his Hundred Days are outraged at his execution and protest against Bourbon rule in Paris.
15 July 1815

● **Outbreak of civil war**
Disillusioned Napoleonic generals and officials seize on pro-Bonaparte feeling amongst the masses to make a grab for power. Events escalate and civil war erupts across France.
September 1815

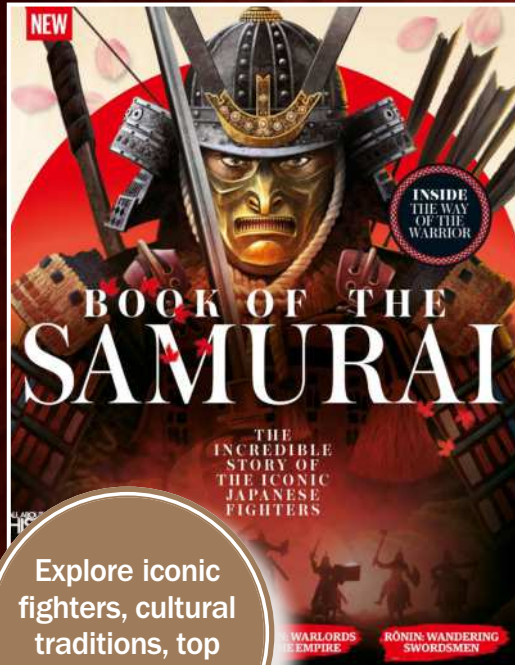
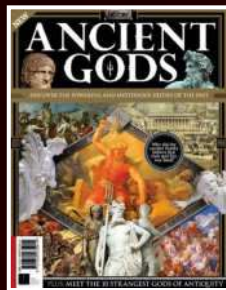
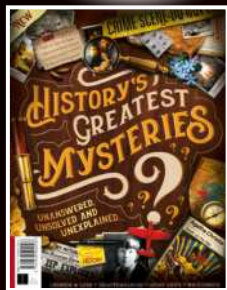
● **Rise of the British Empire**
Britain seizes abandoned French colonies and with a self-destructing France unable to balance European power, the Crimean War between Britain and Russia is possibly hastened.
Mid-19th century



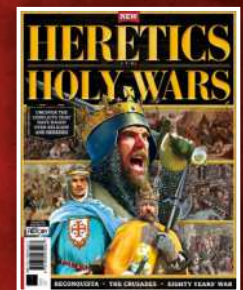
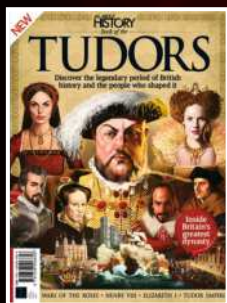
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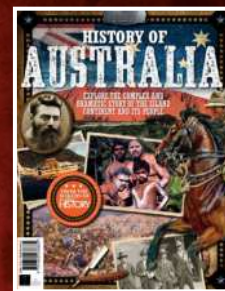
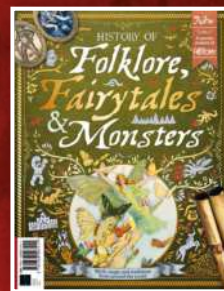
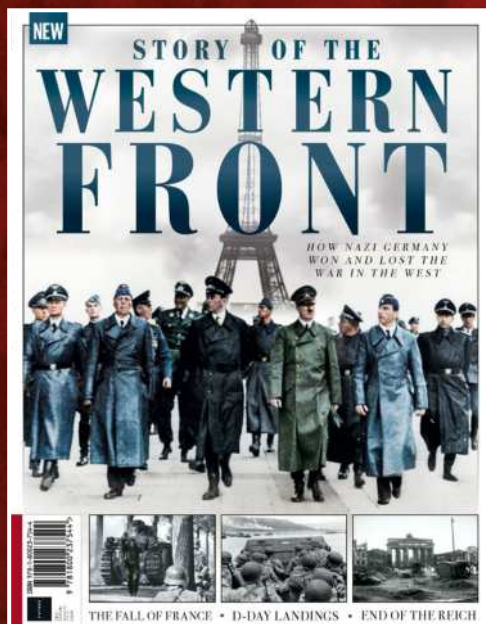
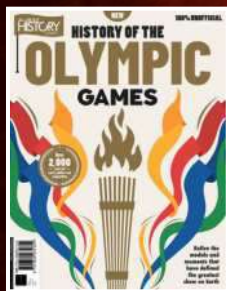
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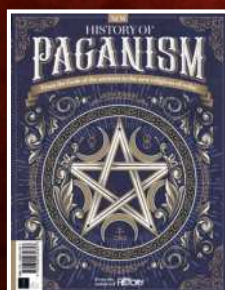
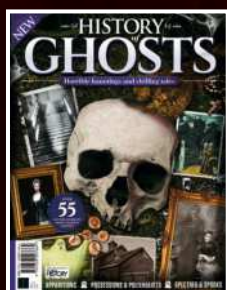


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